THE

CONTRAST,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MATILDA," "YES AND NO,"
&c. &c.

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark! what discord follows!

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

"WHAT'S in a name?" is a question to which, perhaps, a bookseller would be apt to reply—"More than meets the eye." With some suspicion of this kind, I have hesitated much what Title to prefix to the following pages.

I might, it is true, have been satisfied with the safe expedient of any two or three mellifluous, though unmeaning syllables, in the shape of a proper name; but I was anxious, if possible, rather to explain the character than

to record the family appellation of my hero—if hero that person must be called whose failings and whose errors occupy most of these pages.

If I had been writing in French, "L'Homme Difficile" would most nearly have defined the character I meant to pourtray; but there is no synonymous phrase in English. "The Fastidious Man" did not quite please me. I am myself fastidious as to the use of the term, "the Man," in a title explanatory of character. "Fastidiousness" is not euphonious, still less "Fastidiosity," which Johnson passes current.

Under these difficulties I have left my hero to speak for himself, without introduction; and taking what would, perhaps, at first have been the more gallant course, I have attempted to draw the attention of the reader to the diversity

of female character arising, in great part, from difference of situation, under the form, and with the title, of "The Contrast."

One word more, kind Reader, in the shape of an humble petition for that general indulgence which no one can feel more than myself how much I require.



THE CONTRAST.

CHAPTER I.

Will Fortune never come with both hands full,
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
She either gives a stomach and no food
(Such are the poor in health), or else a feast
And takes away the stomach: such are the rich
That have abundance and enjoy it not.

SHAKSPEARE.

——— Your servant and your friend;
One that attends your ladyship's commands.

IBID.

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a certain age,
Which yet the most uncertain age appears.

BYRON.

IN that iron age when Frenchmen marched "en masse" from Madrid to Moscow; when

Continental travelling was effected by drawing not *bills*, but *swords;* when *cannon*, not *credit*, gave to strangers the comforts of home in foreign lands, then were the locomotive propensities of the peaceable portion of our countrymen necessarily confined within the narrow limits of our sea-girt island. Impatient at being thus temporarily dammed up, the stream of society annually flowed outwards from the metropolis down to the extremest low-water mark of the different bathing-places.

It was during this period, that a large party had assembled, at the conclusion of the London season, at the hospitable mansion of Sir North Saunders. Sir North's father had been a great contractor in those days when contracts were worth something; and, having realized an immense sum in the course of the American war, he, in gratitude, christened his son and heir after that minister, to whose persevering pro-

fusion he owed all to which he would be heir. When the almost unanimous voice of an indignant nation had closed the disastrous struggle, Sir Simon Saunders (as the contractor and first baronet was called) was, after a time, completely puzzled how to act.

During the first rapid succession of short and inconsistent administrations, he stuck by the Treasury, with a tenacity as to place, and versatility as to persons, worthy of that renowned vicar, whose peculiar talents in that line have become proverbial. Yet, as upon the permanent ascendancy of the Pitt party of that day, he found that retrenchment and reform were the watch-words at head-quarters, he, in disgust, threw up the whole concern, laid out some of his previously-acquired spoil in the purchase of Hornscliff Abbey, and retired to that beautiful retreat, thinking that, at any rate, a country gentleman contractor was not a

greater contradiction in terms, than a patriot minister.

He was not, however, long condemned to pretend to enjoy a state of existence so uncongenial to all his tastes and habits; and his son and heir, Sir North, not only succeeded in full to all the acquirements of his father's later years, but also inherited, in all its original freshness, that turn of mind which had in youth raised Sir Simon from nobody.

It was not therefore to be expected that he would long bury himself in the solitudes of Hornscliff Abbey, more especially as, coming of age soon after the breaking out of the revolutionary war, and having a great deal of parliamentary interest, the same minister who had disappointed the expectations of the father, now acting upon a different system, granted upon many occasions the utmost demands of the son.

From this time for nearly twenty years, Sir North continued in heart and soul nothing more nor less than a thorough-paced trading politician; most anxious, nevertheless, to veil that character under the reputation of a *bon vivant*, *bel esprit*, and *connoisseur*. To these pretensions, since the last audit-day had given him a glimpse of his beautiful property at Hornscliff, he had added an eager desire to be thought an enthusiast in the picturesque. He had, in imitation of some of his acquaintance, a service of china painted with views of the romantic environs of his place: the beauties which the plates and dishes thus displayed, were, during the season, the constant theme of his conversation, coupled with pressing invitations to his various acquaintance, that as his boasted property was upon the coast, they would make Hornscliff Abbey their sojourning place during the ensuing summer.

This many of them seemed nothing loth to do, particularly as they ascertained that the other *artiste*, whose labours, in their opinion, no less profitably adorned the plates and dishes, was to continue his successful attempts to eclipse the performance of the painter.

"What a beautiful place it must be!" said Lady Madelina Manfred to her neighbour, young Lord Castleton, as she pensively dropped her beautiful eyes on her plate, and continued in a sentimental tone, "I hope that you are as passionately fond of the sea as I am. How sublime its eternal sameness! How grand its boundless limits! Oh, I could look on it for ever!" she added, as she completely covered the German ocean with half a spoonful of bread sauce. "Shall we adjourn there at the end of the season?" continued the lady, with a peculiar emphasis on that comprehensive monosyllable *we*.

It was, indeed, to establish such an identity of interest between her and young Lord Castleton, as would give her a common property in the use of the first person plural, that she had been labouring all through the season. Lady Madelina Manfred was born a fool, but had through life cultivated that species of cunning which fools so often display in the pursuit of an object, if they have one. The object which she had been—I will not say for how many years, successfully pursuing, was admiration. To be sure, nature had assisted her with a pair of eyes which looked as if they could not but mean something, and a voice, whose seductive tones could give a charm even to folly. Her husband was one of those good, easy men, who seem as if only born to give their wives a name, inasmuch as their own is never by any chance heard after they have once accomplished that purpose. Seasons had rolled on; and if

Lady Madelina Manfred's eye had lost some of its brilliancy, her complexion some of its bloom, and her form some of its freshness, there were still many who were wilfully blind to such changes. As Lord Castleton will, in the course of these pages, have much to say for himself, it is unnecessary to say any more for him at present, than that he was but just nineteen; and whatever opinion might then be entertained of the *liaison* lately formed between him and Lady Madelina, it was no scandal, when gossips said that there *was a time* when she had held him in her arms.

To the attractions of the invitation to Hornscliff Abbey, often urged by Sir North, and so sweetly echoed by Lady Madelina, Lord Castleton was not then in a frame of mind to be insensible, particularly as, in addition to all other reasons for accepting it, his guardians were very anxious that he should *not;* and he there-

fore longed to show he was his own master, by putting himself completely at the disposal of Sir North and Lady Madelina, who had both the most deliberate designs, the one personal, the other political, upon his future independence.

To Hornscliff Abbey, therefore, he transported himself, as soon as he found that the waiters at the clubs monopolized the newspapers, and sauntering hackney-coachmen elbowed him as they lounged along the foot-pavement.

Lord Castleton was not by nature at all that sort of being which the acquired habits of the last few months had made him appear, to all who had never known him before. The parting jolt of his carriage moving off the London pavement, seemed to shake from his nature much of that affectation with which the season had encrusted it; and the first breath of

pure country air, as he cleared the last Cockney villa, seemed to revive in their springy freshness, many of those early feelings and tastes, which, however faded for a time, can at nineteen hardly be irrecoverably seared and withered.

As he approached his destination, his spirit seemed to expand with the bolder features of the mountain-scenery by which he found himself surrounded. Though within the immediate limits of Sir North's domain, the effect was almost ludicrous of the attempts which had evidently been hastily and recently made to cripple and confine the bold and gigantic shapes which nature here displayed, in the scanty and servile livery of a dress place. The contrasts thus produced were quite comical. Rugged rocks were encircled by invisible railings; cast-iron bridges swung across the wildest glens; Chinese pagodas rose out of mountain

heather; gilt wire aviaries were dotted about in solitudes, where eagles might have stooped, or black game brooded; and Thames wherries were moored by silken cords along the banks of the shallow, but rapid torrent, which rushed over a rocky bed down to the sea.

At the Abbey itself, these contradictions were more various and more numerous, though perhaps not more striking. It requires nothing else but an unlimited command of money to transport, in an incredibly short space of time, all the contents of a London upholsterer's shop to the remotest and most uncivilized corner of the kingdom; and due activity had been shown in attending to Sir North's order, that Hornscliff Abbey should, without delay, be furnished from cellar to attic. The building itself, situated in one of those snugly-sheltered, but romantic glens, where in former times the monks had generally the good taste

to fix, remained one of the best preserved and most perfect specimens of the abbey-gothic style of architecture: it was not to be expected that any furniture, thus hastily huddled together, should be in perfect keeping with the walls by which it was surrounded; less care was therefore taken that one part should tally with the rest, and articles of every description were crammed into all the rooms, with the same ill-assorted propinquity in which they stood in the warehouses, whence they had been removed wholesale.

But neither French paper on cedar panels, nor fragile wherries on mountain torrents, seemed so much misplaced, as did some of the company whom Sir North had collected to witness his installation as a country gentleman. Many men, whose utmost previous pedestrian feat had been daily gliding from their offices along the smooth flags of Parliament-street to make a House, and ladies, who thought it an

exertion to step from their carriage across a broad *trottoir* on a morning visit, were now expected to thread tangled brakes, and to climb over rugged rocks, in search of the picturesque.

Sir North was determined, however, to play what is called the whole game; and the very day after the arrival of Lord Castleton, had been fixed on for a distant excursion, to a romantic bay on the coast; the beauties of which had been much vaunted by the Rev. Mr. Turner, the picturesque-loving Rector of the adjoining parish; who, upon these occasions, acted as guide, and wasted a great deal of intelligence, taste, and enthusiasm, upon parties generally both indifferent and ignorant; and took a considerable deal of useless trouble in endeavouring to cultivate a mutual spirit of good-will between the wild scenes he loved, and their present super-refined visitors, by smoothing rugged inhospitalities on one side, and endeavouring to cultivate a feeling of admiration on the other.

CHAPTER II.

> There is a cliff whose high and beetling head
> Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
> Bring me to it. SHAKSPEARE.
>
> They were trained together in their childhood,
> And there rooted between them such an
> Affection as cannot choose but branch now.
> IBID.

LORD CASTLETON, in accordance with the claim which we have seen Lady Madelina had established to a common property with him in the use of the monosyllable "we," had passed the evening in hanging over the sofa, on which she gracefully reclined, apart from the rest of the world, within the recess of a roseate-draperied tent, into which a ci-devant oriel window had been converted.

On the next eventful morning the ladies

were to perform the first part of the expedition in open carriages, the gentlemen on horseback; when the road no longer admitted of such civilized modes of conveyance, the ladies were to be transferred to donkeys, and the men to try their pedestrian powers. Lord Castleton had escorted Lady Madelina to her carriage, and had started, with one hand on the barouche door, and the other promoting, through the medium of his horse's mouth, that sort of curveting canter which made conversation during progress easy; but before they were even out of sight of the abbey his attention was diverted by the oft-repeated cry, just behind him, in his host's voice, of "Soho! soho! quiet there!" and looking back he caught occasional glimpses even of the highest *guérite* of Hornscliff, in short of the whole of poor Sir North's *country seat*, between his *equestrian seat* and his saddle. The fact was that Sir North's

stable, like his house, had been furnished wholesale and indiscriminately; but as a *sofa* is easier to sit than a horse, and as Sir North's figure and habits were much more adapted to the one than the other, the want of proper selection was here infinitely more inconvenient. Lord Castleton, seeing the imminent danger in which his host was, could do no other than offer to change with him. This proposal Sir North received without the slightest scruple, which, considering that at the time he thought he was consigning his young friend to the merciless power of the most terrific animal in creation, was a conduct which nothing but an extreme case of self-preservation could justify. Though his new rider did not find much difficulty in managing the unruly beast, yet as Lady Madelina's nerves no longer allowed Lord Castleton to ride by the side of the carriage, he was left, up to the time of quitting

these vehicles, more unoccupied than he otherwise would have been, to admire the increasing beauty of the surrounding scenery.

A train of thoughts long neglected, and a tone of feeling of late untouched, seemed to revive within him, under the impression of outward objects, to which his eye had been now for some time a stranger. The meditations into which he was thus insensibly led were only occasionally interrupted by the bungling explanations attempted by Sir North of the different objects they passed, as he mistook in attempting to re-state the information he had received from the Rev. Mr. Turner. These explanatory observations of Sir North became more frequent, as his equanimity was by degrees revived by the confidence he felt, after the change of steeds, in his restored safety: as he himself technically expressed it, "His seat was now as secure as Old Sarum."

"Pray observe," said Sir North, "the secluded situation of these Druidical remains, which have withstood the changes of centuries, there to your right."

"The Druidical remains I showed you," said Mr. Turner in an under-tone, and as much in Sir North's ear as the height of the little white pony he was riding would enable him to reach, "are half a mile farther to the left."

"Pardon me, my good Sir," said Sir North, "what is that which I see to the right?"

"The remains of a windmill, pulled down by order of the magistrates, for its neighbourhood to the high road," replied the reverend Cicerone.

This little mistake of Sir North's rather checked the torrent of his information, till, after passing a beautiful variety of highland and lowland, in crossing a succession of ridges, they at length arrived at the entrance of the

rocky glen, through which they were to wind their way down to the sea. Here they were obliged to leave carriages and horses, as there was no longer any better road than the timber-track by which the produce of Sir North's woods was annually taken to be shipped.

Lord Castleton, still in close attendance on Lady Madelina, after smoothing many little difficulties, and soothing many affected alarms in settling her upon her donkey, prepared to lead the animal down the path, into the wild and romantic scene whose bold features at every step became more striking.

He looked up on one side at the fantastic forms of the venerable trunks whose roots had for centuries been entwined in the rocky crags from which they grew, but whose wide-spreading branches then luxuriated in the green vigour of a summer foliage; and he looked down on the other at the clear unruffled sur-

face of the brook, which ran murmuring below them. He scented the freshness of the hitherto untrodden fern, as his feet passed over it, and he then cast his eyes upon the fascinating but *fané* beauty by his side, and felt that there was something uncongenial in visiting such a scene under the protection of such a guardian genius, one certainly better adapted to the artificial state in which he had been lately living than to the freshness and nature of the present. Her personal charms, too, no longer in their first bloom, suited better the softened light of the shaded boudoir than the searching glance of the evening sun, to which they were now exposed, as upon approaching the sea the wood no longer afforded the same shelter from its rays, and against the effect of which the utmost skill in the management of the pink parasol could not always guard its mistress, thwarted as her efforts were by the constant windings of the steep path by which they descended, and

the rough motions of the humble donkey on which she was mounted; and even those graceful limbs, whose slightest movement had had its charm when stretched with studied ease upon the luxurious sofa, were now necessarily cramped into angles on an awkward side-saddle.

All these circumstances, though not embodied in the shape of distinct doses towards effecting Lord Castleton's cure, had not been without their effect upon him. They had both been for some time silent, when, just before the last angle in the glen was to open to them that sea-view which was the object of their expedition, Lord Castleton stopping to re-arrange some part of Lady Madelina's dress, which the uneasy motion of the donkey had discomposed, his ear caught for the first time the soothing sound of the measured breaking of the waters in their regular rise and fall against a sloping shore.

The very idea of eternal sameness with which

this sound never fails to impress a romantic fancy when unexpectedly heard, has in itself a tendency to recall the different circumstances, to revive the faded feelings, and to connect the distant spots in which its unvaried monotony has met the ear.

It may already have been seen that Lord Castleton was by nature sufficiently romantic, and therefore he was immediately involved in a labyrinth of thick-coming recollections, which completely took off his attention from the occupation which would lately not have been without its interest, when all his pleasing reveries were dispelled by that voice, whose tones he so much admired, jarring upon his ear in *mal-apropos* inquiry. "So, after all, Lady Waitfort could not get asked to Lady Delacour's ball?"

The disgust that he felt at this ill-timed turn to his thoughts, he was not obliged to express;

for just then they came within sight of the beautiful Bay to which they had been destined, and even Lady Madelina could not help exclaiming, "What a sweet spot!"

Now a sweet spot was not exactly the most appropriate expression for admiration of such a scene; but Lord Castleton was too grateful to her at the time for showing any feeling on the subject, to object to the aptness of the terms in which she vented it.

The "sweet spot" was a deeply indented bay, surrounded with perpendicular cliffs of a great height, which towards the two extremities of the inlet, cut the water in the shape of boldly jutting crags. In the centre they were intersected by the deep glen through which the party had descended; at the bottom of which the mountain-stream found its way to the sea; and even down to the beach, the sides of this glen were covered with fine trees and thriving

shrubs; a rare circumstance in our northern latitudes.

There was in the solitude of the scene itself, and the grandeur of the outlines by which it was enclosed, that which seemed to mark it as a spot where, in one of her angry moods, Nature might choose to threaten some of those more awful and sublime appearances which she sometimes assumes; but at present, the gaiety of the season, the mildness of the air, the splendour of the setting-sun, and the calmness of the sea, the sameness of whose measured splash against the shore was not broken by the slightest swell from without, produced no more than a pleasing sensation of repose. There was no human habitation visible from the sea-shore; but on one of the banks which formed the sides of the glen, about half way from the summit to the shore, just on the single spot where the slope was more gradual, some smoke was seen

curling from behind a grove of dwarf oaks; and still higher, taking advantage of a southern exposure, there appeared a garden, which ran upwards, till the cliff again becoming too perpendicular, it only communicated with the top by means of some steps cut in the rock, evidently with great attention to safety and even convenience. Judging by the little that could be seen of the environs of this dwelling, it might either be the residence of some retired mariner, who chose to pass his latter days upon an acquired competence, still within sight, though safe from the attacks of that element which had been the scene of his earlier adventures; or it might, on the other hand, be the dwelling of some opulent farmer, who had sought the shelter of this southern slope, from that exposure to which the upper land must there be subject.

At first, the party imagined that they were

the only living creatures that at present tenanted the semicircular shores of the bay; but upon passing the angle of a rock which projected almost to the water's edge, Lord Castleton and Lady Madelina discovered two youthful figures leaning against the gunwale of a solitary fishing-boat, which was moored close up to the cliff. The eldest of these two seemed a stout, healthy-looking lad of about sixteen, with a well-made figure and rather a handsome head, though, for the age which his general appearance indicated, his person was strong set and square, and his countenance marked and decided. His dress evidently bespoke a nautical calling, though it was of that indefinite description which might belong to any rank in the service of the sea; his dark-blue jacket and trowsers were, however, quite new, and apparently put on with some attention to effect; in his right hand he held by the middle a

fresh-cut oaken staff, of that description which, among the lower orders, generally indicates an impending pedestrian journey, and which seemed equally well calculated to lend its assistance to the legs in their regular labours, and upon any extraordinary occasion, to give additional powers to the hand that held it. The top of this staff he leaned against his mouth, his eyes were intently fixed on the regular rise and fall of the waters before him, whilst the fingers of his left hand, which hung by his side, nervously grasped something, of which, as they half closed upon it, only the end of a blue ribbon appeared. By his side stood one of those figures, which occasionally and unexpectedly cross our path, to put us again in good humour with human nature, and prevent our being entirely disgusted with the endless varieties of ugliness of which the mortal machine is capable, by showing, on the other hand, the

perfection of which the same conformation is sometimes susceptible in every rank and all situations. Here, a form, which among the nobly-born would have been said to bear the stamp of high birth—which, in the land of ancient tradition and sculptured authority, would have been said to show the signs of pure classical extraction, was found lowly born in an obscure corner of a rugged clime. Even the delicacy, which gave an unlooked-for charm to the appearance of one in that situation, was enhanced by her extreme youth. She was two years younger than her companion; and, though tall of her age, slight, and still childish in her form: the natural cheerfulness of her innocent countenance was then clouded by some present sorrow, which added to the interest she was calculated to inspire. Her right arm leaned lightly on the shoulders of her companion, and her eye, in which a tear still trembled, was fixed upon the hand which held the ribbon.

"What a perfect study for Gainsborough!" said Lord Castleton, as he and Lady Madelina stopped to gaze on the youthful couple, of whom, the angle of the rock had given them, unobserved, so near a view.

"Gainsborough!" said Lady Madelina, "I thought he made people with waspish waists and powdered hair; I am sure I never saw such a figure as he has made of Aunt Theodosia, in the picture-gallery at Lumberhead-hall."

"Alas, poor Gainsborough! the native offspring of his tasteful imagination are no more like my aunt Theodosia, than that beautiful girl is like ———." He did not finish the sentence, but the look he gave might have said more than was either civil or welcome, had not the horizontal sun at that moment fortunately caused the interposition of the pink parasol.

CHAPTER III.

One of those forms which flit by us when we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
And oh the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding! BYRON.

———— My love to Hermia
Melted as doth the snow; seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
Which in my childhood I did dote upon.
SHAKSPEARE

"I THINK this would be a good place to pick a bit," gasped Sir North, as he came up with Castleton and Lady Madelina, puffing in such a manner, as showed that his fat sides felt the difference between the smooth flags of Downing Street and the shingles of the sea beach. "I advise no one," he added, turning

to the rest of the party, "to spare the cold meat, for we have not the least chance of being back for dinner. I told you last night, Lady Madelina, if we did not breakfast before twelve, we could not do it; and Mr. Turner says, that the lane where the carriages are to meet us, at the top of the cliff, is fourteen miles from home. "Here, my lad," said he, to the seafaring youth, "run and call those servants with the baskets, and your sister can get us some water from the brook."

"She is not my sister," said the lad, without stirring a step.

"Not his sister!" exclaimed Lady Madelina; "then upon my word, my pretty girl, you begin in time; and, I declare, we interrupted a flirtation."

"But I am his cousin," eagerly added the girl, as if instinctively claiming the relationship, as a justification of what she could not

have known. For flirtation, that sickly creation of crowded idleness, was equally unknown in name and in nature, on the silent and solitary shores of Morden Bay.

The rest of the party having now come up, the servants also arrived with the provisions, though the lad had disregarded Sir North's authoritative address to him to summon them. The guests, hardly casting a glance around, certainly not wasting an inquiry about the beautiful scene, where they found themselves, proceeded at once to what appeared the real object of the expedition—the cold collation which they had brought so many miles to eat in a peculiarly uncomfortable manner. They might, perhaps, in the intervals of this important occupation, have vented a few common-place expressions of admiration; but, unfortunately for Mr. Turner's feelings, who endeavoured several times to lead the conversation that way,

they had met the post on the road, and as the newspapers of that day contained the account of the long-expected demise of one of the oldest supporters of the party to which they belonged, they found ample food for conversation, not in lamenting his loss, but in discussing the various pretensions of the probable claimants for his Government, his Garter, his Regiment, and his Sinecure. At length, after this had continued some time, a "rising young man," on the ministerial side of the house, who had many years to look forward, before he could hope to put in a claim for any thing of the sort they were discussing, took advantage of a pause to make an abrupt turn in the conversation, by saying, "Capital shooting, I should think, in the covers up that glen, Sir North?"

"Yes, Sir," interposed the lad, who had been still leaning against the boat behind the

party, and until now, a silent spectator of their proceedings; "the surest place in all the country side, to find the first woodcock, and so uncle says, before my time."

"What do you know about woodcocks, my young friend?" said Sir North: "do you know, I am afraid that you and your uncle are little better than poachers?"

"Uncle rents the Bankside farm, as did his father afore him; and when our south intack is in stubble, when I am staying with uncle, we go out coursing sometimes, and of a fine afternoon, he takes his gun with him up the glen, to look for birds."

"Very wrong, very wrong, all this," said Sir North. "Who is your landlord?"

"I never seen him, but the Baronet Saunders, Esquire, I think they call him."

"Ay, ay, I was afraid so," said Sir North. "This comes of neglecting to give these poor

creatures the blessing of a country gentleman's residence on his estate — totally disorganizes society,— turns the farmers into poachers; this must not be so in future: no my friends, I must do my duty in the country as well as in town. So, my lad, you say, you never saw your uncle's landlord, Sir North Saunders?"

"No; but once I saw lawyer Drainem, when he came to collect half-year's rent, and I suppose that be much the same thing."

"Well, now you may tell your uncle that you have seen me, Sir North Saunders; and tell him, that I mean to give my tenants the benefit of my presence, to arrange all this upon the proper footing."

"And you, my pretty girl," said Lord Castleton, approaching the object which, during this conversation, had been engrossing most of his attention, "do you accompany your cousin on his sporting excursions?"

"No, Sir," said she. "I have seen much less of George since he has taken to coursing, and now we are going to lose him entirely."

"How so?"

"To-morrow he leaves us to serve his time in the seafaring line, with another uncle, who is captain and part owner of a vessel in the transport service."

"And you are afraid that he will forget Morden Bay, and his favourite cousin, and would therefore like to follow him?"

"If he forgets me, I should not so forget myself as to recollect him," said the little girl with a dignity which, from one of her age and station, surprised Lord Castleton. She then continued, in a more childish tone: "Nor would I leave my only home, my flowers, my daisies, my daily occupations, and my shells, for to follow any one friend."

"Then I am sure, if I were your friend

George, I would not leave Morden Bay and the pretty prize which for him it contains, for all the rest of the world."

The language of flattery fell for the first time on the unpractised ear to which it was addressed; for it never had been cousin George's way to say soft things. She knew not what the words meant, or indeed that they meant any thing; but there is an instinct in every female breast, which returns a responsive echo to tones, such as those in which this otherwise common-place expression was uttered. One moment she cast her eyes upwards on the face of him who unexpectedly addressed her thus, then as suddenly withdrawing them, and striving to hide the first conscious blush that had ever tinged her pure and innocent countenance, she drew upwards the summer-bonnet, which had slung across her shoulders, and pointing to the path by which

most of the party had already begun to ascend, she motioned Lord Castleton to follow.

As they ascended the cliff, he made common-place inquiries as to what her family consisted of, and learned that she was the only child of a father, whom she named in a tone of true affection, and a mother, whom she mentioned respectfully, but apparently with some degree of restraint; beyond them her *kin* (and as she would have said her *ken*,) was confined to her aunt, a single woman, who lived in a lone house round the next point, and of whom she spoke warmly, and "Cousin George," of whom her present questioner did not ask much, and she answered less.

Whilst he still kept multiplying unnecessary inquiries, and giving by his manner to the most trifling an air of interest, he purposely lingered by the way, till his fair guide at length suggested that they should either mend

their pace, or lessen their distance, by taking a short but steep cut, which in a direct line joined the regular path again, after that, by an easy rise, had traversed two long sides of an acute angle; "for," said she, "if we do not mind, Sir, the rest of your party will have passed our gate before we reach it; and though mother is not much given to seeing company, I am sure she would not like those ladies to go by her door, without biding a bit to rest; and that poor lady looks as if she needed it, and the lusty gentleman isn't fit to help one so weak as her," pointing to Lady Madelina, who had been obliged to accept Sir North as Lord Castleton's substitute, in ascending the cliff,—an affair for which he was peculiarly disqualified, the action of his *lungs* being so much greater than that of his *limbs*. He had stopped at the corner, really to recover breath, but under pretence of venting his admiration

of the prospect, of which he was gasping forth an encomium, in most wheezy interjections. Lady Madelina's eye, whilst affecting to follow the different directions in which his cane was pointed, had dropped upon the figure of Lord Castleton ascending from below, and she was puzzling how to get up an attitude of interesting languor, whilst leaning on Sir North, who was unfortunately some inches shorter than herself, and of a figure which did not lend itself readily to group into the line of grace.

"She seems dreadfully tired, that poor lady," continued Lucy, (such had Lord C. found his companion's name to be,) "and no wonder she should be; 'tis well enough for a young girl like me to run up and down ten times a day, but 'tis rather a fasheous step this, and I've known mother be almost as bad as she is."

This casual comparison to her mother did

not give to Lord Castleton's imagination a turn calculated to assist Lady Madelina's attempts to excite his admiration at her present would-be interesting exhaustion; and seeing that two more angles of the path would again bring him where the irksome duties of a "patito" would be exacted from him, he was disposed to remonstrate against his companion's anxiety to hurry upwards and do the honours of her humble roof, when a loud voice exclaimed—

"Sir North!—Castleton! Where are you? make haste, pray; only think, it wants but fifty minutes to the half-hour bell."

This admonition came from a celebrated "diner-out," who, except once when he had passed a September on the "pavé" in London, never remembered the day when his dinner had been in such danger.

"And are you really going so soon?" said

Lucy to Lord Castleton, observing that the above warning had accelerated the motion of every one of the various groups on the sides of the cliff, and even induced Sir North to give something like one effective tug to the arm of Lady Madelina.

"You see it does not depend upon me," said Lord Castleton, "I am under orders, but shall certainly linger till the last."

"I should like much to know why you came at all," said Lucy, with an archness which surprised her hearer. "I thought it had been to see the Bubbling Well, or the Black Glen, or the Dead-man's Crag; but merely to walk down that burn side, to climb up this cliff, and bring all that fine food, when there was not even a table to eat it off! 'Tis seldom we have seen a stranger here, but when some came once before, they were two gentlemen painters."

"Yes, yes, artists, I suppose," said Lord

Castleton; "and they were the only strangers you have ever seen before?"

"Yes; but they stayed some days, and lodg-ed at father's; and when they went away, they left him in return the likeness of the bay, not as it is now, but all in a storm, done all over on a bit of the finest mahogany wood, and it 's now at aunt Alice's, for mother said she did not like such vanities, much more to have, summer and winter, to look on the sea in that dreadful state; 'twas bad enough when it really came so."

"Why any of us came, I can hardly tell, my pretty little friend; but for myself, though I have not seen the Bubbling Well, or the Black Glen, the walk up this cliff has been so pleasant, that I should be glad to come again."

"But you have been a long time about it," said Lucy: "I wish you could see cousin George, how he climbs the side of yonder crag

above our heads! when I call him, he is at the top before you can count fifty; I don't think, for all you like the cliff so much, you could do that, Sir."

There was something in this invidious comparison which did not please Lord Castleton, though he ought to have been no more hurt at the imputation of inferiority in such an accomplishment, than if he had found six months afterwards, that he could not reef a main-top-sail as well as cousin George. He replied, however, "I believe I ought to try that now, to have any chance of rejoining my party; but before I go, though I have not stayed long enough to paint a picture like your last visitors, may this," said he, unslinging a small French watch, which hung by a light gold chain round his neck, "may this serve to remind you of these fleeting moments, and may it record for you many hours, as happy as the few last minutes it has marked for me."

"I am sure aunt Alice would say I ought not to take this," said Lucy, hesitatingly; "yet, perhaps, if you would not object, cousin George will want a watch now he is going to leave us, and it had better serve to remind him of me, than me of you; for I am afraid it is not like I should see a gentleman like you again, Sir."

"To you I give it," said Lord Castleton, "'tis for you to dispose of it as pleases you," and throwing it round her neck, he rushed up the cliff, with an activity, which she could not have denied would have done credit to cousin George himself. Near the top he met that individual descending from escorting the rest of the party; a mutual "good evening!" varied only by "Sir!" on one side, and "my lad!" on the other, and not in a very cordial tone on either, was all that passed between them.

Lord Castleton found his horse left in the care of a groom at the top of the cliff, with a request that he would follow the rest of the

party as soon as possible, their return having been much hurried by the imminent danger to which they foresaw the various *entrées* would be exposed by their flagrant unpunctuality, for they were still fourteen hilly miles from Hornscliff Abbey. Lord Castleton, in his present frame of mind, was not very anxious to rejoin the party, and therefore, regulating his pace so as just to keep them in sight at the opposite side of the various alternate ridges and dales they had to pass, resigned himself to his reflections, which it would be puzzling to present to the reader, in that connected form which they never assumed. They began with a sigh to the charms of unsophisticated nature, which nature immediately assumed the form, and recalled the smile of Lucy Darnell. He then dwelt on the rare union of beauty and of innocence, which brought up for a moment an unpleasant recollection of how he first saw her,

sitting on the boat with cousin George; this he hastened to obliterate by imagining past habits of childish familiarity, and then by fancying cousin George tossing about for years to come in his transport-ship.

He then thought of the soothing sensation of repose which he had embodied from the beautiful scenery of Morden Bay, and he invested the residence of farmer Darnell with the character of the last chosen retreat of peaceful content in this troubled world.

From that, as he caught a glimpse on the summit of the opposite hill of Lady Madelina's Sol-pleurants, fluttering in the evening breeze, he recurred to his late 'liaison' with her; and his memory immediately collected with astonishing fidelity, every incident which had happened in its progress, which, at the time, rather *degouté'd* him, but which he had, till then, almost forgotten. As he urged on his horse

to join some of the party, who he saw had perceived him, and were waiting in consequence, he concluded with the determination, that the first spare day he would again ride over alone to Morden Bay. But "a spare day" is not so easily found in the midst of such a party, by one whose actions none imagined to be at his own disposal, and who, as the passive half of Lady Madelina's constantly-repeated *we*, was supposed, of course, included in every arrangement she suggested.

A country-house is the most unfavourable opportunity for attempting to break chains which habit has riveted. The party consequently broke up, new prospects opened upon Lord Castleton, and new pursuits were undertaken, without his having a second opportunity of visiting Morden Bay.

CHAPTER IV.

——— Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
SHAKSPEARE.

At one kind word their arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child, caressing and carest. BYRON.

IN the romantic charm with which the fancy of the enthusiastic, though casual admirer of Morden Bay, had invested all it contained, he had considered the retired residence of the Darnell family as the chosen abode of content. He judged hastily; and yet he might have inquired farther, and reasoned more deeply without being undeceived. His opinion was founded on the tranquil beauty of the scene;

and here he ran into the common error of attributing the same effect from surrounding objects on those to "the manner born," as had just been awakened in himself, by recent comparison and contrast. It operated as a tonic on his feelings, just then palled with dissipation. 'Twas "medicine to a mind diseased;" but only daily food to those who had never known any other: innocent and salubrious no doubt, but producing no excitement, and having no other effect on the moral system than regularly excluding many temptations to vice. He would have thought, however, his hypothesis farther confirmed, if he had learned that those who dwelt there were in most comfortable worldly circumstances, removed alike from the fears of want and the desire of ostentation; that they had not even a neighbour to envy; that, human cares and ailings excepted, they were healthy alike in

mind and body. And yet was it not the abode of content.

That it was not so, arose entirely from one circumstance, which would have been supposed incapable of having so much effect upon the happiness of those around, by persons unaccustomed to observe by what trivial causes the peace of families is sometimes disturbed. Mrs. Darnell was a most worthy woman, correct in all her intentions, exemplary in the discharge of all her duties, from the religious down to the domestic; but she was a person of an unfortunately minute mind, with a sort of clock-work regularity of sensations: with her, each duty, of every degree, was, in its allotted succession, of equal importance; and, undisturbed by any deviation into feeling, she not only observed them herself, but, like the dial, pointed them out to all about her. Any omission of the due decorum of any rule, she trea-

sured up, not till it had been obliterated by subsequent punctuality, but till it was succeeded by some fresh deficiency; by which means she contrived that she should never be without a grievance: not that she was ever in consequence loud or angry; this she would have thought wrong; but she put on a most provoking appearance of patient endurance, which was exactly the sort of look her husband could least bear, and which inducing, in consequence, occasional violent ebullitions on his part, gave her the reputation amongst those who knew little of both, of suffering meekly under his violence, whilst the many more frequent occasions in which he had yielded at length, for the sake of repurchasing a smiling face at his domestic hearth, were unnoticed, because unknown.

Dick Darnell, as he was familiarly called by those who had known him in his younger days,

though now turned forty, had in character much of the simplicity of a child, with warm affections, a cheerful temper, and a disposition all whose natural bias was good, though never much disciplined in the school of self-denial. It was lucky, perhaps, that he was born in a situation where temptations did not too much abound; for there were moments in which he was supposed not to have been particularly successful in resisting those that had occasionally crossed his path. Now that he was no longer very young, his appearance would be best described by the epithet hearty. His person had been handsome, and if its bulk had now increased beyond the proper proportion, it had rather become portly than unwieldy; and the good-humoured and cheerful expression of his laughing eye, seemed to inspire sympathy at first sight.

He had become acquainted with his pre-

sent wife at the county town, during assize time. She was the daughter of a respectable tradesman, who was known as one of that peculiarly strict class, who put forth exclusive pretensions to monopolise righteousness; she had therefore received a very serious and unexceptionable education. Richard Darnell had done his best for many years to try to love her, and would at that very hour have been very much surprised if anybody had told him that he had not succeeded, for he always assured his acquaintance at the market-town, to which he went once a week, "that for sixteen years he had been married to his *Missus*, and he never had had so much as one occasion to find fault with her." He dropped at these times all mention of those many occasions on which she had found fault with him, which had led to those altercations mentioned above. But there were few of his friends who had not

remarked, that of late years he never found the weather so bad as it used to be when it frequently prevented his coming at all to market; but that, on the contrary, he often found the distance in returning so much longer than formerly, that when dark and wet, he could not possibly reach home over night, but stayed till the next morning. His daughter he loved better than all the rest of the world put together; and when he returned from these excursions, and had not seen her for four-and-twenty hours, he would like to sit in the chimney-corner, with her slight form resting on his capacious knee, and picking out those of his adventures by the way best suited to meet her ear, would chat on for ever and ever, and ask no other reply than to see the expression of his own laughing eye reflected in the softened likeness of his daughter's delicate features.

But these were, in Mrs. Darnell's idea, mo-

ments of time most completely wasted, and she would generally interrupt them by demanding, —"why Richard would not stir himself, and look after his men, whom he had left a whole day without a master's eye," and by informing Lucy, she thought "her hands might be more profitably employed at her needle, than in hanging idly about her father's neck."

Next to hanging about her father's neck, her mother thought that the most useless way in which Lucy's hands were sometimes employed, was holding a book. That is, to do her justice, she drew the distinction between the use of a book as an amusement, or as a duty; as the latter she not only very properly enjoined the lecture of the Psalms and Lessons of the day, but enforced it so regularly, that one of Lucy's delinquencies, to which most frequent plaintive allusion was made, was, that *once* she had inadvertently read the Evening

Lesson in the morning, a fault which it was impossible to undo, but by doubling it, and reading the Morning in the Evening. All reading beyond this, whether history or fiction, she treated alike as vanity.

The duty of letters she did not consider as that of a standing army to be sent abroad on the sea of knowledge, to extend the empire of the mind; but merely as a sort of local militia, to be called out at stated times on this one home service.

Such limitations as in this respect she put upon herself, she would have exacted from Lucy, had not the latter been taught differently in the course of the frequent visits she made to the aunt, mentioned above. This aunt was an unmarried sister of Dick Darnell's: some years his junior, she had come to establish herself, within the memory of Lucy, at a small but neat cottage round the next point, which had

originally been built as a house of occasional call in bad weather, by a gentleman who had been sailing about in a yacht on that coast.

She was a lone woman, who had evidently had her sorrows, not yet forgotten by herself, though never obtruding their chilling contagion on the spirits of her young visitors, who always found her anxious to participate in their cheerfulness, though even at their thoughtless years they sometimes noticed the effort that it required to enable her to assume an appearance contradicted by the care-worn character of her beauty, which, striking as that beauty still was, did not give the idea of a person so much younger than her brother as she really was.

It was curious to trace what is called a family likeness in two persons so totally unlike. Her form was altogether of another mould, and different habits had given the deportment

of a different rank in life. If the resemblance could be traced to any definite feature, it lurked in the benevolent smile of the mouth, of which her's was the miniature copy of his, though that which gave to his its joyous character, the sparkle of his laughing eye, if it ever had existed in her's, was now prematurely obscured. She lived entirely alone, with the attendance only of one maid servant, and dependant for society, (if she could be called dependant on that which she did not seem to require) upon the frequent visits of her niece, the occasional calls of her brother, or his nephew George, and those, luckily, more rare occasions on which Mrs. Darnell found her way as far as her cottage, mildly to murmur over her grievances. Though always cheerfully receiving these separate visitors, the same disposition which, when she first came into the neighbourhood, made her decline her brother Richard's hos-

pitable offer, to lodge her under his roof, seemed still to induce her to avoid the full family reunion at their own house; and the only place where she met them altogether, (and this she rarely missed,) was weekly in their common pew, at the Parish Church, three miles off. It is impossible to conceive two persons more different in the detail of their dispositions, than Mrs. Darnell and this sister-in-law. The one with every thing to make a home happy and comfortable, yet (one could almost as little tell how, as why,) contriving to turn every thing into a grievance: the other, to whom the world seemed to have done its worst, to have separated as an isolated being from its interests, yet the chosen confidant even of the changeful fancies of children, and occasionally sought as the depositary of the complaints of her whom she so little resembled.

The fact was, that Alice Darnell had unconsciously assumed over her sister-in-law that influence which a strong mind can hardly fail of exerting over a weak one. This prevented her mother from objecting, as she otherwise might have done, to the loss of time occasioned by the frequent visits of Lucy to her aunt. There might, perhaps, be another reason for this. Alice Darnell, though still young, was in a precarious state of health, which had indeed been given by Richard as the reason for his sister's wishing to retire there; and, as curiosity was not one of the flaws of his wife's character, she had always believed this to be the only cause of that measure; but Miss Darnell's fortune, for her rank in life, seemed considerable, and whom was she to leave it to? This was a consideration which often crossed Mrs. Darnell's mind, as she had been educated in a school in which, in the midst of

pious contempt for the vanities of this world, a beneficial distinction was always taken between its empty pleasures and its solid advantages.

Alice Darnell had not what, in the enlarged sense, would have been called a library, but she had some shelves well-stored with the common editions of the English classics. Lucy generally found her aunt occupied among these, but one thick octavo, she remarked, was a constant favourite. It was a compendious volume, for it contained all Shakspeare. In answer to her niece's question, "Why she read it so often?" she said, "This is the world in which alone I wish to live. As long as this little book is left me, I am less alone, more in the midst of human nature, than in the most crowded city."

For once she spoke more according to her own feelings than to the capacity of her she was addressing: she perceived her mistake. The

little girl could not understand her, but her curiosity was roused; she anxiously listened to her aunt, who commenced reading to her selected passages, in a manner which added all the charm of voice and delivery to what was in itself so well calculated to interest; and from that time forward one of the most eagerly anticipated pleasures of her visits to her aunt was to cry with "Constance," or to tremble at "Lady Macbeth;" she never saw a storm without thinking of poor "King Lear;" cultivated her *red roses*, out of sympathy for the "House of Lancaster," and neglected the *white ones*, out of mere spite to "Richard III."

CHAPTER V.

Adieu! I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave. SHAKSPEARE.

What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bosom,
The partner of her infancy! BYRON.

LUCY DARNELL was found by her cousin George, when he returned from escorting the strangers to the top of the cliff, still leaning over the little gate which led through the garden to the house, and still curiously examining what she thought the extraordinarily small watch the gentleman had given her: as soon as she perceived him she cried out, "What do you think, cousin George?"

"What do I think?" said he a little out of humour, he hardly knew why; "what do I think? why, that you made that gentleman loiter so in coming up the cliff that he has missed his party."

"Why, I did not make him loiter; he would not walk any faster; he did not seem used to it, though I told him how quick you could climb to the top."

"I am sure he was going fast enough when I met him," said George doggedly.

"Well, it is very odd; to be sure he did jump along limber enough as soon as he left me, but I could not make him try before. But what do you think I have got for you?" added she, showing the watch.

"And how did you come by that thing?" demanded George.

"That gentleman gave it me; but I only took it for you, George," observing that he looked displeased.

"Thank you all the same, Lucy, but let it bide where it was meant it should. He would never have given it to the like of me; there was over many reasons why he might have done so to you."

"I thought," said Lucy, "it would serve to remember you of me whenever you looked at it."

"But I had rather not remember you and him both together, as that thing would always be making me do."

"I don't know what 's come over you, George," said Lucy puzzled, "but it 's hard, when I hoped but to please you, you should speak so cross, and this your last night too."

"I did not mean to be cross," answered George in an altered tone; "but I can't take that watch for another reason, for see, I 've already got one just like it," fumbling in his fob, and tugging out with some difficulty, at the end

of a long stout steel chain, which appeared as if it might have served for fetters, an immense pinchbeck turnip-like time-piece, the recent gift of his uncle. As this capacious and ponderous concern was displayed by the side of the diminutive *Brequet*, Lucy, though unaware of the relative value of their different dimensions, could not help smiling at the comparison, and, with restored cheerfulness, said, "Just like it, George! yes, just as like it as you are to the stranger gentleman."

They were here interrupted by her mother's voice calling Lucy from the house.

The various additional avocations which the approaching departure of her nephew, in Mrs. Darnell's opinion, entailed on her daughter during this evening, prevented the cousins again speaking together that night. But Lucy was aware that her cousin would before breakfast in the morning go over to take leave of his

aunt ; she had therefore risen earlier than usual, and carefully executed, as she thought, all the morning duties which maternal authority could exact before any one was stirring, when George, having just come down as she was preparing to cross the flower-garden with him, her mother's window opened, and in a precise tone, which indicated a succession of questions, she asked,—

"Lucy, my dear, have you skimmed the milk ?"

"Yes."

"Have you looked to the bread ?"

"Yes, mother."

"Have you fed the poultry ?"

"Yes, mother."

"That 's right; then you'll have time to hem your father's new shirts before breakfast, so I 'll bring them down."

This was known by both who heard it, how-

ever mildly expressed, to be a command from which there was no appeal; so George only said, "Before I come back, Lucy, they'll all be down at breakfast, so I only wanted to say that last night you called me cross, and as I lay awake in bed afterwards, I thought of many more times I had been so, though you had not told me so; and what I wished to say is this: you know I've been to sea once before now, though only to try it, but enough to know it's another sort of thing to think over the like of these in one's warm bed here, when one has only but to come and say, Lucy, I ask your pardon, and see your sweet smile in return, than to have it come across one's mind when one's far away, walking the deck on a dark night, thinking of one's distant home, that lies just in the wind's eye, and a hurricane blowing one the Lord knows where another way, perhaps never to return. Nay, I did not

mean to distress you, Lucy; only just say that if I 've ever been kind to you you 'll think only of that, and not of t'other sort of conduct, whilst I am gone and away—"

"I never do—never can—never will, think of you but as my kind good cousin George," hastily answered Lucy, hearing her mother's measured tread descending the stairs, shirts in hand.

After George's return, and the somewhat silent breakfast had been nearly despatched, Mrs. Darnell started up from the top of the table where she had been sitting, and enquired "And what will Jackie Pattison be doing there? sure, if he isn't driving up the old mare and the pony from the low pasture."

"And where's Jackie Pattison? I don't see him," said the farmer, anxious to get a little time to prepare his defence for the attack which he foresaw.

"And will it be your bidding then, Richard, that he is doing?" who now guessed it all.

"I told him my mare and the pony would both be wanted; so if they were in the low pasture, it 's like he 's been to fetch them," answered Richard, with a determination for once to face it boldly out; "I mean to see the lad as far as Mayton, where he takes coach; it would have been over far for him to have walked, and the pony will follow me back again like a dog."

"But he meant to walk. He said so when I told him not to cut yon stick out of the oak-copse; and you to go away, Richard, and leave me lonely, to fret at George's going, and to spend your silver idly by the way; and then to take away the mare that 's wanted in the draught, now we're so throng in the hay-time; it's just of a piece with a' the rest.

"It 's just of a piece with a' the rest,"

was, as her husband had learned to his cost, a comprehensive allusion to all her former grievances, some of which were to be ready to reinforce the present attack, provided it was not in itself effective; but in this instance he knew that all these names were rather put forward as heads of chapters for future complaints on his return, than expected to prevent his departure. He therefore thought it would be useless to subject himself to have them twice repeated by answering them now; so drawing his wife aside, he suggested, "that he only went in order to keep the lad out of harm's way at Mayton, till he saw him into the coach which was to take him to the port where his other uncle's ship lay."

"Well, if you must go, mind you do that," said Mrs. Darnell, "and do for once speak serious to the lad, and counsel him how he falls into evil courses."

The parting between George and Lucy, though public, was affectionate, as indeed their near relationship in itself authorised.

Farmer Darnell, hardly believing as yet, that he could have got off so easily, started at first at the steady pounding jog-trot of his cart-mare; a pace which required unequal alternations of shambling, walk, and canter, on the part of George's pony, to keep up with. At length the uncle thinking it was time to attempt to execute his wife's injunctions of a lecture to his nephew, pulled his mare up to the pace she was used to go in draught, and began—

"It's a bad world this you're going into, George."

"Is it indeed, uncle?" quaintly inquired George.

This abrupt questioning of what, without feeling its truth himself, he had always consi-

dered an incontrovertible position, rather disturbed the course of the uncle's intended lecture, as he replied, "Why, to be sure, it must be. Doesn't the parson tell us so every seventh day; and doesn't my Missus, who is as good every bit as he is, and therefore ought to ken as well, repeat it to us all the other six? For my part, to be sure, I can't say I find much fault with it. 'Tisn't all made up of Sundays — that 's certain — but that one couldn't expect; and if there were but *two* market-days in a week, I 'd be content with one Sunday in each."

"And yet aunt says if you went to market once a fortnight only, 'twould be better."

"Your aunt is——the best woman in the world," continued the uncle after a dubious pause; "how she 'll stay at home herself to save me money! But between ourselves," added

he, lowering his tone, and approaching his mare to the pony, "she's a little apt to take it out in fashing one. As you're going to leave us, I may say to you, but mind you don't repeat it, that when she does get hold of a bone of contention, she'll never leave hold no more than my bull-bitch Bess would. She certainly is," he added, casting a look instinctively behind him, though two ridges had interposed between his dwelling and the part of the road where they then were,—"she certainly is enough sometimes to worry one out of soul and body, and there's truths out. But what I wanted to tell you, George, is, —have a care of the women; if they been't over good, they're over bad, and they're a main deal of dead weight for a man to carry either way."

"I don't think cousin Lucy would ever be a dead weight to any one," said George.

"She! bless her lightsome heart! no!" cried her father in a burst of parental affection; "she'd be but a feather weight in the longest course, and yet as good as gold too. But I didn't think of her, and was talking of you, and the nonsense of sweethearting a lad like you might fall into when you may be ganging with some painted Jesabels, who would pick your pocket first, and box your ears afterwards: have nothing to say to the likes of them, George; show 'em your stern at once; no one is safe from their arts: remember King Solomon,—not that I mean that all women are alike, or that a man shouldn't say thank you, because she's a woman, to a buxom kind-hearted person, like our landlady, Widow Westbury, when she tries to make him welcome all in a friendly way."

As George had never before accompanied his uncle to Mayton, and had always come

the other road himself, he had never heard of the Widow Westbury, and was puzzled to connect his uncle's two cases of the hostess and Solomon. But the honest farmer continued what he thought his useful instructions.

"Another thing,—beware of drink, boy; it's a filthy trick, and the drunkard, after all, has but a sad time of it, for the reproaches of wine, on the morrow, are worse than — than — my wife's: not but that it's a hard thing to help taking another glass or two sometimes, when one meets an old friend, and one feels to like him better and better every sup, and each draught makes one's stories tell the merrier, and one's laugh come the heartier."

In this alternation of strict advice to be correct in conduct, and over-ready excuses for being otherwise, in which, unintentionally,

the honest farmer followed the example of many *soidisant* moral works, wherein a good word is given to virtue, whilst sympathy is excited for error, they arrived at Mayton. It was a neat little country-town; its broad, open, well-paved market-place, with ancient cross in the middle, was surrounded by many tidy-looking dwellings of various dimensions, beyond which the town extended in the shape of streets, but a little way down the different roads which here united. From the circumstance of the market-place being evidently the centre of attraction, it appeared that Mayton derived its principal consequence from being the mart of the surrounding country; which might also be inferred from the number of second-rate houses of public entertainment with which it abounded. Passing by one of these, which boasted on its board the exclusive dignity of "neat post-chaises," Farmer Dar-

nell made straight up to the smartest of the others, before whose door swung the head of a most formidable-looking female, with a little crown stuck on the top of her head, and underneath was written, in gold letters, "Ann Westbury;" an apparent appropriation of the portrait by the hostess, which gave her the name of "Queen Anne" among many of her customers; a dignity with which, coupled with the resemblance implied, she was by no means flattered.

CHAPTER VI.

I'll ne'er be drunk again but in honest and godly company, for this trick. SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was not the usual market-day bustle outside the Queen's Head, and Farmer Darnell dismounting, followed his old mare, who well knew her way to her usual stable in the back-yard through the passage, which was so narrow as to limit its accommodation to equestrians.

"Call the hostler, lad," said the farmer from the stable to George, who had followed him into the yard; an injunction which George vociferously complied with, thinking that now the sooner he and his pony were separated the

better for the indulgence of their mutual appetites.

"Eh, Sally, and who will that be calling about him?—run and see," said a voice from the back of one of the outhouses, at the window of which the person who had thus spoken immediately appeared, and seeing George, continued, "And is it only you, my lad, making all that clatter? who taught you to call about you like a lord? They say patience saves many a pennyworth of lungs—what may you want, pray?"

"Uncle and I want our horses fed."

"And who is your uncle?" inquired the landlady.

When, Richard Darnell presenting himself at the door of the stable, his appearance answered the question.

"And is it indeed you, Mr. Darnell—and this not market-day?—and of all days in the week

that you should just look in upon me at washing-up, and I a shame to be seen," she added, half raising her soap-suddy hands to pull her cap over her *papillotes*, till recollecting that such a contact would not be advantageous.

However, no one of her time of life could better bear to be seen at disadvantage than the Widow Westbury, for upon the whole surface of the fair fresh skin which the *papillotes* left unshaded, forty winters had failed to leave a furrow, and during as many summers her indoor avocations had saved her even from a freckle; whilst an active disposition had prevented her full form swelling into corpulency. On this occasion, the sleeves tucked-up almost to her shoulders, displayed a well-rounded arm, and tidy habits had prevented the rest of her dress from being discomposed, or even her apron splashed. "And if that idle fellow Joe Hostler won't be gone to the 'leatherplating

sporting on the Wold! but you know where the corn is kept, Richard, and here is the key of the bin," (throwing it to him,) "and I'll go and see after your dinner and the lad's."

Now, though this was a part of the establishment upon which she much prided herself, yet, upon this occasion, with a special injunction to be careful, she consigned it exclusively to Sally, preferring to spend the next few minutes herself rather before the looking-glass than the kitchen-fire; and when George, having fed his pony, was seeking his room up-stairs, he found her coming out of hers, with the cap changed, and the *papillotes* removed. By the excessive care she immediately took of all his comforts, she soon removed the unfavourable impression at first made on his mind by the rebuke he had received from her for his stentorian bellowing after the höstler.

During the savoury and substantial meal,

George could not help remarking, how all his uncle's tastes were consulted, with a delicate attention, which combined the zealous activity of the hostess with the acquired tact of companionship; and as he observed the exhilarating effect it had upon his spirits, and as he contrasted it with the state of subjection he suffered under at home, he no longer wondered at the fervent wish he had expressed, " that there were two market-days in every week."

Soon after dinner, which their long ride had made rather late, the snug trio was swelled by the dropping in of two of the natives of Mayton, upon whose hands, in consequence of their fellow townsmen being more *healthy* than *wealthy*, time occasionally hung a little heavy. These were an extra apothecary, and a supernumerary attorney, articles in which the market of Mayton had been overstocked.

They were both of them jovial companions

over a bottle; an accomplishment which they had the more opportunities of cultivating, as, before their arrival, the supply of both physic and parchment had in Mayton been fully equal to the demand; and whilst there was another doctor or druggist in the neighbourhood, everybody was convinced that the apothecary had neither skill enough to write prescriptions, nor shop enough to make them up; and unless there should be some *third* party to lawsuit beside plaintiff and defendant, no one would leave either of the two established practitioners for the new attorney.

The consequence of all this was, that they had frequently met Farmer Darnell at the Widow Westbury's; one of which occasions had produced almost the only case in which either had been employed; having, as they walked home together late at night, literally *thrown* into their hands a common joint job, in the shape of

a sleepy "outsider," who, swinging round the corner on the top of the very night-coach by which George was going, was chucked off at the moment they were passing by. The doctor bled the passenger, and the lawyer bled the coachmaster, in the shape of an action for damages, and the jury being more inflammable than the patient, they both succeeded beyond what their professional merits fairly earned. Having soon heard, (as what is not soon heard in a country town?) that Farmer Darnell was stopping at the Queen's Head with his nephew, who was to go that night by the one o'clock coach, they stepped in to learn the why, and the where; and upon hearing that he was about to commence his career afloat, insisted upon drinking his future success in life in a bottle of port, or a bowl of punch. This, at first, the farmer declined, probably from not liking to exceed before his nephew, and

mistrusting himself enough to know that the first was the most favourable moment for resistance, and that abstinence was easier than temperance. The hostess, though professionally interested in the affirmative of the proposal, seemed to regret, that by the interruption of her chat with her friendly guest, and her own necessary withdrawal from the drinking bout, she should pay in person what she received in purse.

The question, when a decided negative was no longer possible, having been put to Dick Darnell, in the amended form, "whether it should be *port* or *punch?*" with the zeal of a convert he voted for *both*.

George Darnell, in whose exclusive honour they were undertaken, seemed not to participate in the pleasure the others took in these mingled potations. In fact, there were many things he regretted in the home he was leaving

behind him, and it did not please him that the image of "cousin Lucy," on which his fancy liked to dwell, should be whisked away in the rotatory evolutions of the apothecary's red nose, and the attorney's bushy brow, which both seemed soon to dance round him, as the mixture of *old wine* and *new rum* took a speedy effect upon his unseasoned head. The last thing he recollected distinctly was his kind hostess smoothing his pillow, and assuring him that he should not be too late for the coach.

When he awoke from his heavy slumber, it might have been *five hours*, or only *five minutes* afterwards, all was perfectly stilled around, and instead of his uncle's mellow voice singing a hunting song, and his two companions croaking in untuneful chorus, nothing met his ear but the loud ticking of the kitchen clock.

He had an indistinct recollection of old Sally having been sent on some such celestial em-

bassy as "up to the Angel to let him know when the Star stopped." He still dreaded being too late, and the ship sailing without him, when he found that, in spite of the wine, he had, as is often the case, waked instinctively just at the proper time, for the piercing notes of the guard's horn were first heard in the distance, and then, as it reached the pavement, the rattling clatter of the coach echoing through the empty streets.

George hurried on his clothes, thinking, as he was left undisturbed to do so, it was lucky that he did not trust to his hostess's promise to call him. He hastily huddled on his things, and making his way down-stairs, by the first glimmer of dawn he perceived that the door of the hostess's room, through which he had seen her come the day before, was open; he concluded that she had just then stepped into his uncle's to call him in time to take leave of him;

as was probably the case, for they very soon descended together, the hostess ostensibly to let them out, and Darnell to escort his nephew to the coach. George took a short farewell of the kind hostess, who, being only hastily half dressed, ensconced herself behind the door she held open.

The uncle's faculties seemed still a little offuscated with the effects of the last night's debauch, as, after walking most of the way to the Angel in silence, he said, "You'll not forget, George, to tell your aunt all the good advice I gave you yesterday."

"You forget, Sir, that I am not going home, and that it will be long before I see my aunt or any of you again."

"True, true; and perhaps, when you do, it may be as well to have clean forgotten all about this last night. Good bye, George; afore you see your old uncle Richard again, you will

have seen many more men who preach better than they practise."

Helping George up with one arm, and shaking his hand heartily with the other, he did not relinquish his friendly gripe till the horses began tugging hardly more powerfully the other. George soon lost sight of his uncle's portly figure in the indistinctness of the misty dawn, and it was long before he again caught a glimpse of any of the previously familiar forms of his early youth.

CHAPTER VII.

The villain! I believe a man to cozen somebody.

SHAKSPEARE.

- Give me any clothes;
I will some other be—some Florentine,
Some Neapolitan, or some mean man of Pisa.

IBID.

IT was a little more than four years after the events of the last chapter, that one evening the apothecary, mentioned above, was saun-tering listlessly along the smooth flags of the market-place at Mayton. He had been lately more than ever puzzled how to pass his time, for he had lost his former boon companion, the attorney. The fact was, that, in one of

their jovial bouts, in despair at the world's continued blindness to their respective merits, they had, in an affectionate fit of inebriety, mutually sworn professionally to employ each other. This was a bargain, of which the advantage was clearly on the side of the doctor. He was not a rich man, and therefore was no food for the lawyer, who, after he had drawn his will, and had recorded in the most technical manner his medical friend's bequest of a few empty phials to himself, had done his worst. But the attorney was not a healthy man, and, therefore, he afforded at least practice for his friend. At last the lawyer took to his bed, where his physical Pylades still followed him: and, whether in consequence of the effects of the many draughts of which they had previously partaken together, or of the last which the doctor only prescribed,—the attorney died, and his medical friend

was left alone to wander up and down the streets of Mayton, and watch the regular arrival and departure of the public conveyances, in the vain hope of some such other lucky accident as once happened in the lifetime of his companion.

On this evening, as he strolled by the "Queen's Head," he was surprised to see a hack chaise, without horses, drawn up before the door. Now, as it has been stated above, that the "Queen's Head" was not an inn of rank enough to reciprocate such modes of conveyance, it was an unusual act of condescension for a vehicle of that kind to be upon visiting terms with it.

This was, therefore, quite event enough to make the apothecary inquisitive, and, as he strutted back again by the windows of the little ground-floor parlour, where it was recorded in the last chapter he had met Farmer Darnell, he peeped through an hiatus in the blind, which

he well knew of, and saw a young man sitting by himself at the table, writing, with his back rather turned towards him.

"That's the person it brought, and it's not a wedding after all," thought he, obliged to give up the idea of the merry-making which his first speculations had included. He, however, strolled into the kitchen to inquire, and there finding the hostess said,

"So you've got some post-chaise company to-day, Mrs. Westbury: I thought at first it had been a wedding? Perhaps it's a husband for yourself at last, widow. I often wonder whom you've been waiting so long for."

"For your first patient, doctor; only then I'm afraid you'd soon make me a widow again."

"Quite the contrary, perhaps, widow. I might promote population, '*in utrumque paratus.*'"

The pedantic conclusion of this rejoinder on

the part of the doctor, who had been originally a man of grammar-school education, prevented its being understood, or in consequence resented by the widow.

" And the person who came in the chaise is—?"

" A very civil-spoken sort of a decent young man," interrupted the widow. " I should at first almost have taken him for a great gentleman, by the whiteness of his hands and the fineness of his linen, for all his clothes were not over new or smart, and I might have bustled about and made a to-do for him; but he told me at once, without making believe to be what he was not, to take care of a large book tied round with strings, full of drawings and paintings, for that he lived by the sale of them, and he wanted to take some more likenesses of the coast not far off from here."

" And Jack brought him from the Cock at

Moreby ?—How d'ye do, Jack ?" turning to a post-boy whom Sally had just been supplying with a beefsteak and a mug of ale. "What, I suppose with little blood chesnut mare and bay gelding, I saw at the Angel, when you and Joe Simmons brought Sir North in an hour and a quarter from Moreby. But how come you at this house; the widow's beefsteaks good, eh?"

"Why he said himsen, that he wouldn't gang tift first inn, and when he'd be gettin here he'd dun wi' posting; and so I told un, if he'd loike to bide a bit, the widow would keep in well, thof she couldn't forward un."

"And he came in the same way to your house in which he left it?"

"He come'd in't same way, but soa did another wid un, a much smarter nor he, and yet the tother put all this'uns things in't chaise for him, and stood at door looking after him, till I driv off."

"He 's been asking me about Morden Bay," interrupted the widow, "and I 'm sure I didn't know much about it myself; but I told him to-morrow was market-day, and Richard Darnell would be sure to be here, and he'd hear all about it from him; and he said that would just do, and he would wait till then."

"Let me go and talk to him," said the Doctor, "I dare say I shall do just as well as the farmer; and have a bottle of your oldest port ready, in case I ask for it. You 're out of lemons, I'm afraid?"

The Doctor went, but returned sooner than he expected, evidently disappointed, though at first he said nothing, but walked about, took up the anticipated bottle of port, which had already at his desire mounted thus far from the cellar, and was waiting at this half-way-house, with the decanter by its side, in which it was to pursue its journey to the parlour. He

brushed off the sawdust, held it wistfully to the light, and then told the landlady she might carry it back again; but, "One word first, widow," said the Doctor: "You know I've a regard for you; look to your spoons, that's all. A very suspicious-looking person, believe me. When a man shuns good company, it's a very bad sign. I introduced myself in the civilest way, saying that I understood he wanted to dispose of some drawings, and that I might have an opportunity of recommending them in the course of my professional practice. And when I was undoing the strings to look at them, he took them from me, and said that they were already disposed of. I then talked of Morden Bay, and began describing it at random, like any other bay; and then he interrupted me by asking if I had ever been there; and when I said, not that I could remember, he said he thought as much; and

just as I was chatting on about something else, he told me that he was writing, and that if I considered that a public room, he would ask for a private one. Depend upon it, when a chap of that kind comes Captain Grand over one, and wants to be as dull as a lord, he has some reason for it. It 's a very suspicious story altogether. Who was that swell confidant Jack says he left at Moreby? Who knows? they may be French spies, taking a survey of the coast, and the portfolio he was so afraid I should see, may be chuck full of treason."

"But you forget, Doctor, we are at peace now, and have been for some time; and I don't know, whether he be French or English, that there is any harm in his painting a few trees, whether they grow near the sea or not."

"I have it," said the Doctor, but appa-

rently the last suspicion was too weighty to drop lightly, and, buttoning up his coat, he only added, " A few days will show whether I am right," muttering to himself as he went out, " General Ludd, General Ludd, General Ludd !"

But few years have passed since the Doctor pronounced that then awful name, and many of my readers have never heard of " General Ludd," at that time the dreaded object of the ephemeral fears of every loyal Englishman. His fame, too recent for the stores of history, too obsolete for the currency of conversation, is now less alive than that of many a brother general, who swells the half-pay list under the grateful denomination of " dead weight."

Whatever suspicions the Doctor had at that moment instilled into the mind of the Widow Westbury, they appeared to have been

obliterated, in a long conversation which she had the next morning with the stranger; for when her friend the Farmer arrived, she told him there was a *nice* young man, who was very anxious to board at his house for a few weeks, whilst he sketched the surrounding scenery. She told the Farmer he must not be hard upon him for terms, for that he said he was as poor as need be, though just able to earn a decent subsistence by the labours of his pencil.

The Farmer, who had no objection to the daily presence of a stranger, who he hoped would rather restrain his family discomforts, did not anticipate much objection on the part of his wife, who, as she had every year become more fond of money, and liked the *coin* itself, rather than the comfort it could purchase, would welcome the pittance of the stranger, however small; determined, at the

same time, not to augment, in any respect, the expenses on his account. One difficulty only occurred to the Farmer: what in days of yore had been called the "spare room," was now tenanted by the hams hung up to dry. But there was George's room vacant, which had been empty ever since he left it; he therefore made acquaintance with the stranger, and the bargain was concluded between them with the facility which might be expected from two easy people, mutually eager to be accommodating. One thing only kept alive a sort of suspense in the hostess's mind against the stranger; whilst talking with her, he had folded up and directed the letter he had been so long writing, and which she observed to be a bulky packet. She had offered to put it in the post for him herself, and, approaching it for that purpose with rather a curious feminine eye, he had hastily turned

the direction downwards, and declined her services, saying, that he would put it in himself, which, accordingly, he had stopped to do, whilst riding out of the town with Farmer Darnell.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ay, mine own fortune is my misery.

SHAKSPEARE.

Go thither, and with unattainted eye
Compare her face with some that I shall show.

IBID.

His letters bear his mind.

IBID.

'Tis hatched and shall be so.

IBID.

THE letter, which had been thus carefully forwarded by the stranger, had by no means a treasonable exterior; it was directed to "The Right Honourable ———, &c. &c. &c. &c., one of H. M. Principal Secretaries of State," and contained an inner envelope to "Wm. St. Clair, Esq." It began as follows:—

"MY DEAR ST. CLAIR:

"When I consider the official atmosphere in which this will be opened, and that it is to be read by a person now filling a situation with such a dry unromantic name as *précis* writer, I can hardly hope for that sympathy in some of the feelings it will describe, which, even in earlier days, your more worldly mind was sometimes inclined either to withhold, or to mix up with a little unwelcome 'persiflage.' You have often told me, that with every kind disposition to pity the peculiar hardships of high rank, and the severe burthen of a large fortune, still I was the friend whose misfortunes you would the most readily share. But the very circumstance of your quizzing me a little on this head, by showing me that you cannot flatter, makes me believe that you may feel for me, when I complain of those irksome advantages of wealth and situation which have prevented

my being ever convinced that any one really cared for me for myself alone. With men, I do not so much mind that: the sterling ore of friendship is too weighty for the exchange of every-day intercourse, and the paper-currency of popularity passes just as well. But with women, from my earliest acquaintance with them, I have always been haunted with the consciousness that true love is not to be bought, and by the constant idea that I could not be loved for myself; a distrustful suspicion that, I grieve to say, experience has hitherto only tended to confirm. In every situation, wherever I have been known, I have always had the same fear, but too often the same conviction of its justice. I have fancied I could trace the same expression in every female face, from the hacknied smiles of venal beauty, in whose profusion one could plainly read 'he pays well,' up to the would-be attractive simper of the shy debutante,

which had been already tutored to follow the maternal whisper. I have tried in foreign countries to escape the unfortunate fame of my wealth and liberality, but in vain: many half-formed illusions of the 'grand passion' have been dispelled by the exclamation, '*Milor qui est si riche.*'

"The first severe lesson of this kind I received, you will have heard in the world told in different ways. During my minority, I was induced to raise money to pay the debts of Lady Madelina Manfred,—I don't like trusting the post with names, but about her there can be no scandal. The demand staggered me. I believe I was half cured before; however, I paid the money, and dropped the connexion. She affected indignation at my fickleness and desertion, which at her time of life was rather a blow, but secured at the same time the whole sum, (ten thousand pounds, I think it was,)

and then eloped to spend it with a Captain O'Connor, in Connaught, and poor Manfred is still in the rules for her debts.

"I did not think so much of this at the time; I was then very young, and attributed it to my own folly in having allowed myself to be inveigled by a woman old enough to be my mother, all whose better feelings had been hardened by an habitual disregard of her marriage vow.

"The next year I was very much in love with ——you may, perhaps, have heard the story in the scandal of the world, but I will not here publish the name, because still unchanged, for she is yet unmarried.

"My guardians asserted, which was the only reason why I doubted it, that I was then much too young to marry. But I was at that time sick of intrigue; I thought it would be a glorious thing to monopolize for ever

the first affections of one then so universally admired.

"Her mother, Lady ——, was always talking to me of her daughter's youth and innocence, to which I attributed the reserve with which my attentions had been at first received, pleased as I was to find it gradually lessening during their continuance.

"The newspapers had already hinted, in unmistakable initials, at a marriage in high life; I had as yet said nothing, but was determined, as I knew the paragraph must have been seen, to observe first what effect that had produced. The paragraph went the round of the papers uncontradicted: perhaps I ought to have contradicted it; but as I observed no diminution of cordiality in consequence, I believe I should instead have declared myself, but that just at this time a military cousin of mine returned with despatches from the Peninsula.

He was a *very*, *very younger* brother, that is, one of a very large family, with very little fortune to divide. I had not seen much of him lately, but as we had been together as children, and I was one of his nearest collateral relations, he came to consult me on an engagement which he said he had formed previous to his joining the army in Spain, and upon the possibility of procuring the consent of the family of the young lady, at whose house it appears he had visited from country quarters.

"He owned that he had nothing but his profession, in which, however, his hope of promotion was now great. But the young lady had herself some money, and to prove that her affections were sufficiently engaged to justify him in venturing, he showed me some letters he had received, full of assurances and unutterable attachment from the nameless beauty, who had since been receiving my addresses!

The letters, it is true, were not of a very recent date, but this the time occupied in his voyage homewards had prevented his remembering.

"Here, then, was a more complete explanation of the coldness with which I had been at first received, than the mother's palliations of youth and innocence, and an utter extinction of my own dream of monopolizing the first affections of a virgin heart. I would willingly have persuaded myself that it was sensibility to my own superior merits which had sufficed to obscure a former transient impression; but when I looked at my cousin's handsome, sunburnt features, and thought of his honourable distinctions obtained in the field-of-battle, and compared it with my own useless, lounging life, I could not deny that the real nature of the change must have been the worldly advantages of one "*parti*," as compared with the imprudence of the other connexion; for in no

personal attractions could I flatter myself that I surpassed my cousin.

"This conviction operated as a summary cure of my passion, and left in its stead mingled feelings of disgust, at the deceit which had been practised on myself, and pity for my cousin.

"Poor fellow! when I saw how deeply his happiness was involved, I could not bear to take on myself the task of destroying his hopes; I therefore, without explaining my motives to him, hastened that departure for the Continent, which my guardians had long been anxious I should not delay, and left him master of the field to try his chance. I heard afterwards, that his suit was rejected by her friends, with an abruptness, probably increased by his being supposed to have prevented my proposals. I have reason to believe also, that he was more regretted by the girl herself than would

have been expected from one whose actions were so much those of an automaton; but however that may be, the first rejection was final, for the next year my poor cousin was killed at Waterloo, where he was supposed unnecessarily to have sought danger, not unwilling to close an irksome existence with a glorious death.

"The whole of these events made a deep impression on me; and, confirming preconceived opinions, gave me a decided distaste for a London-bred wife, and extended my distrust of the disinterestedness of the affections of women in the world in general; which last feeling you have occasionally remarked upon at some of the many places abroad, when in the course of your professional attaché-ship, during the last few years, we have so often met. You will say, perhaps, that it arose from a determination to judge motives with a jaundiced

eye; but I am every day more convinced, that worldliness is at the bottom of every woman's heart whom I have known, of every country, and in all states, whether maid, wife, or widow —ay! widow worse than any. Since your return home, I have met on the Continent one of that class, perhaps at first one of the most fascinating creatures in the world. I think it very probable you may have met her. Young Lady Gayland, married at seventeen to an old man, a friend of her father's; a widow at nineteen; and now, at one-and-twenty, her own mistress, with the vivacity of a child, and the wit of a woman of the world.

"I did hope that her's was a situation where the affections might have fair play. Neither perverted by vicious habits, like Lady Madelina—for Lady Gayland made an excellent wife to old Sir Joseph; nor warped by maternal manœuvring—for she had no one to please but

herself, and was left with a large fortune, which put her above prudential considerations, —I was in hopes that she might at once merit and appreciate that admiration which her beauty excited; but I was deceived again. I will not enter into particulars, as I have, I trust, completely escaped from her fascinations; though even at this distance I think too often of her to feel quite confident on that head. If you had seen the sudden jerk with which I dashed away my pen, which had been the instrument of conveying to you in the last sentence that profession of indifference, you might have been sceptical as to its sincerity; but a few paces up and down the smallest of country-inn parlours have brought me to my senses. It is sufficient to say she deceived me. I was fool enough to think that I had inspired her with a feeling pure and fervent as my own, when, in the midst of this vain dream, I was

suddenly awakened. Within a week after the arrival of that confident coxcomb, Frank Melmoth, who only courted her for her fortune, the melodious tones of her musical laugh chiming in with all his flippant nonsense, rang on my ears as the knell of all my hopes. Perhaps, after all, I was too hasty; she might not really care for him; but I had every reason at the time to think so, and now it is all over. It is sufficient to say, that she is spoilt by the world, and can have no real feeling, for she is disposed to laugh at every thing, and to receive even sentiment with a smile. Upon one occasion—but I said I would not particularize, nor will I, because among other reasons, at this distance of time, I do not feel quite sure but that you might smile likewise. Suffice it to say, I am at length convinced, that in our rank in life, the feelings are too early perverted by the world, to hold out to a person, who thinks like me, any real prospect of happiness.

"No; I will seek something as different as possible from all that I have hitherto described. No bad second-rate copy of Lady Gayland could I tolerate; and if I am to be sustained in my fixed resolution of forgetting her, it must be by seeking contrast, and not imitation, that I must hope to succeed.

"What my present plan exactly is, I will not say; but once in my earlier days a vision crossed my path, of a simple child of nature, fresh and beauteous as the morn. Think of the delight of first winning her pure affections, as one not elevated above her own rank in life, (the case is certainly not without precedent,) and then the pleasure of declaring myself afterwards, and the consciousness thus derived, that whatever additional gratification may arise from the advantages of rank and fortune, they could not be the cause of the connexion, but from their subsequent disclosure were matter of surprise, not speculation. Now, will

you be anxious to find out the scene of this plot; but even if you get hold of the cover directed to your 'chef,' you will be only misled by the postmark, as that is intended purposely to deceive.

"But be satisfied with a degree of confidence, such as it is—quite unusual in these close and uncommunicative days—and pardon the length to which it is fine-spun; for bulky as the packet is, the privilege of your place will prevent your paying for it, and the duties of your office will, I am sure, leave you complete leisure to read it.

"Your's,

"CASTLETON."

CHAPTER IX.

You are welcome, Sir;
But not so well apparelled as I could
Wish you were. SHAKSPEARE.

Go to my chamber; put on clothes of mine.
IBID.

All impediments in fancy's course
Are motions of more fancy. IBID.

LORD CASTLETON, or rather Mr. Churchill, as we must in future call the "*soi-disant*" itinerant limner, felt a little awkwardness at the publicity of his first appearance in his assumed character, as he rode out of Mayton by the side of Farmer Darnell,—a mode of transferring himself to his new residence which he had

preferred to the alternative of being consigned to one of the farmer's return teams, which had that morning brought there, as he assured his new acquaintance, " the finest load of upland meadow hay which had come to market that season." Mr. Churchill had therefore hired for the purpose, at the Queen's Head, the hostler's own pony, which besides the advantage of his paces, a low straight shoulder, and somewhat of a string-halt, had a mouth with about as much feeling as a well-worn pulley, through which a smooth snaffle ran without the least effect: added to these qualifications, being of a domestic turn, he had an invincible dislike to wander far from home, which he did not show by violent resistance, but by the patient endurance with which he reluctantly yielded, step by step, to the incessant hints of Churchill's unarmed heel.

As Richard Darnell was in consequence

obliged frequently to pull up for him, during the first mile or two, it could not be concealed, that the painter did not look very comfortable, or much at his ease, and Darnell addressed him with:

"More used to handle the brush than the whip, I take it, Master Painter. Pretty nearly the first time you were a horseback, maybe? Lord, man, I hope that a'n't the way you would paint St. George, as I suppose you have done afore now; the dragon wouldn't have much ado to pull you off."

And the farmer chuckled good-humouredly at what he conceived a harmless joke upon a subject on which he could not imagine that his companion could have any vanity.

But it may be recollected that Lord Castleton had very early been rather proud of any opportunity for the display of his horsemanship; he had indeed for two seasons been a

crack-rider in Leicestershire; but for all that it is very true, that no tailor could have looked more out of his element on Joe Hostler's rough ill-broken pony.

During the greater part of their way the dialogue was confined to the qualities of different soils, the prices of different years, the proper succession of crops, and the measures of various markets;—if, indeed, that could be called a dialogue, which consisted in a profusion of unasked information on the one side, and exclamations of mechanical assent on the other.

As they approached the coast, the afternoon, which had hitherto been fine, became gradually overcast; a creeping mist, by degrees, enveloped the surrounding country, and, thickening as it advanced, was accompanied by a mizzling rain. Lord Castleton, completely wet to the skin, arrived at the top of the

cliff, which they were to descend to Farmer Darnell's dwelling, without being able to distinguish a feature of the scene which had so enchanted him the last time he had seen it. Churchill was received at the door of the house, not by her he longed to see, but by her mother. Mrs. Darnell greeted him courteously, for now that he was again separated from the pony there was something in his air and appearance which, until his story contradicted it, rather betrayed his real rank in life. Supposing him to be a gentleman, to whom her husband had offered shelter, the hostess expressed great solicitude about his catching cold, and begged him to put on some of her Richard's clothes whilst his own were drying.

To this, as his own things were not yet come over from Mayton by the waggon, he at once consented, and was escorted to what was to be

his, and which had been, George's room, to effect the change. He was aware that it had not yet been explained to Mrs. Darnell who he was, and his intended temporary residence in her household; and, as he could overhear, without distinguishing the words, the alternate tones of a gruff and a sharp voice in the room beneath, he concluded the explanation was then going on, and, by the increasing preponderance of the "Alto" over the "Basso" notes of the duet, he was afraid it was not taking a favourable turn.

His toilet was the sooner concluded, as the difficulty consisted, in his case, not so much in getting into Farmer Darnell's clothes, as in keeping them on afterwards. He could not help thinking that his appearance must be rather ludicrous, though there was no looking-glass in the room by which to ascertain the fact. He had, previously to adopting his assumed character, cut short his own

lighter hair, and superinduced a black wig as a sort of disguise; but, as personal disfigurement was no part of his plan, the wig was not of that homely make which would suit the cut of the borrowed garments he now had on.

As he entered the room down-stairs he heard the female voice end the argument with, "It 's just of a piece with a' the rest;" and then, turning to him, she said, "So, young man, I hear Richard has been settling with you to stay and board with us a bit: there 's not another man in the country, but him, would bring a stranger at once into a decent family; no offence to you, who, I dare say, are a quiet well-behaved body, that won't give us any fash; but it was so like Richard, that 's all. However, I have no doubt you wouldn't have come if you hadn't the money to pay for your board, for, after all, 'tis but an idlish uncertain sort of calling your's."

"I've no objection to pay the first week in

advance, and, though far from rich, have no doubt that I shall be able to continue to do so, therefore make yourself easy on that head, my good woman."

"Good woman, indeed!" muttered she; "Mrs. Darnell's my name, Mr. Churchill, as I hear that's yours. And what may you get by this vagabond sort of life? 'tis a pity you didn't fix in some town and stick to painting houses and signs."

"The different ranks in our profession are as various as the colours in which we deal, from those whose genius elevates them to the society of the great, to the hacknied drudge, to whose wholesale daubing you would confine me: but though I can never aspire to emulate the first, yet I find that by indulging my fancy in sketching on the coast in summer, and making drawings for cheap engravings in the winter, I can maintain myself, with care and economy, above all dread of want."

Churchill meant by this last speech accurately to describe the sort of indefinite situation in society which he intended to assume. But much of it was unintelligible to Mrs. Darnell, who, satisfied by his offering to pay his board and lodging in advance, that he was not a swindler, turned to answer her husband's inquiry, "Why he had not seen his dear Lucy?" by telling him that the girl had been over to see her aunt, where she had probably been detained by the weather, and might not come home that night. Churchill therefore made up his mind that he should not be gratified with the sight of the object which had brought him there till the next morning, which, considering his present grotesque appearance in her father's clothes, he did not much regret; and, having sufficient topic for reflection as to his future conduct in the situation he had so abruptly assumed, he remained comparatively silent,

whilst Darnell and his wife so far made him at home as to discuss together domestic details, without the least regard to his presence.

But just as they were about to separate for the night, the latch of the garden-gate was heard to click, and a light step quickly to cross the gravel without. The imagination of Churchill had already anticipated what it was to produce, when almost at the same instant the door hastily opened, and Lucy rushed in. The first impression on the mind of the stranger was, upon the door opening, that her figure appeared some inches higher whilst standing in the threshold than his recollection had led him to expect. His next remark, however, was the perfect symmetry of her form, which the last few years' progress towards maturity had confirmed; and as she threw off her bonnet, and shook back the locks of her rich brown hair, which had been disordered by the storm she

had just braved, Churchill thought he had never seen a countenance in which innocence and intelligence were so happily combined.

"And what do you come back for in this gait, spoiling all your clothes?" said her mother.

"Nay, mother, I'm sure you're glad to see me safe at home," said Lucy in a deprecating tone, at the same time kissing her: "I never slept from under this roof in my life before, and I did not like to begin now, for all aunt wanted me to bide with her all night."

The tone in which this was said disarmed even Mrs. Darnell's fault-finding disposition,—Churchill would have wondered if it had not,—and Lucy threw herself into her father's arms, whom she had not seen before to-day, and then drew back upon observing the stranger. He had risen upon her entrance, but felt an awkwardness, which was visible in his deport-

ment, as to how to present himself: this was increased by the unfitness of his present costume: he felt that to attempt a pretty speech or courteous greeting would be absurd, and he was not sufficiently assured what sort of deportment would be befitting his present appearance. The consequence was, that he stood sheepish and abashed; and he, who had scattered his smiles with a feeling of condescension round the most brilliant ball-rooms, and had dropped unasked, with a certainty of welcome, into the choicest "boudoirs," blushed with a sense of shame beneath the enquiring gaze of a simple country girl. So easily does disguise or deceit entail with it a consciousness of inferiority.

"'Tis a young man in the painting line," said her father, seeing he would not answer for himself, "who is going to stay here a bit, and paint the country: you must show him

the Black Glen and Deadman's Crag, and some of your favourite spots."

Lucy gave him, in answer, a smile of welcome, which Churchill fancied was changed to one of a more satirical character, as she examined his dress and figure: this, however, was checked by her mother, who insisted upon her no longer remaining in her wet clothes, but retiring to bed. The whole party then separated for the night.

Lord Castleton was left alone in the occupation of George's garret. The first thing he did, as he walked along the floor by the dim light of his farthing candle, was to knock his head against the beam which ran across its low ceiling; the next was to sit himself down in the only chair in the room, and reflect upon the novelty of his present situation, when, spite of his efforts to resist it, a general sense of discomfort stole across him. Planned at a distance, his scheme had comprised only

the great outlines of "disinterested attachment," "simplicity of nature," "unconscious beauty," and "freedom from the trammels of rank;" but the details had either escaped him altogether, or had worn a different shape, when fancied from afar, than that which they now assumed in practice. He had expected to receive from the cordiality of hearty hospitality, all those attentions which he scorned to accept as the servile offerings of dependent inferiors; and he had not been at all prepared for the occasional contemptuous jocularity, and generally protecting tone of the farmer; or for the half-hinted suspicions, and cautious bargaining of his wife; both which were carrying the absence of undue deference to him, farther than he had anticipated.

On one subject only he had not been disappointed,—that was, in the appearance of Lucy.

"And, after all," thought he, "what does

any thing else signify? I ought rather to be pleased with the rest, however disagreeable in itself, as the best proof that my scheme works well, and that if I should, as the unsuspected Churchill, treated in this unceremonious manner, succeed in winning her affections, I need, through all my after-life, never have a moment's mistrust that I was loved for myself alone."

Consoled with this reflection, he proceeded with less dissatisfaction to make a survey of the various "désagrémens" of his present confined chamber, which was as uncomfortable as possible consistent with perfect cleanliness. An inventory of the furniture might have been contained in one line, and the walls presented one unbroken surface of whitewash, except where, over the chest of drawers, three bits of paper were pinned up for ornament: the centre a wood-cut of Lord Nelson's fu-

neral car; on one side of it a roaring sea song, and on the other a sentimental ballad, whose only possible merit was that the heroine's name was Lucy. These relics of George's fairings had remained here undisturbed ever since his departure.

The bed on which its present tenant prepared to stretch himself, was not very well calculated for the literal fulfilment of that operation, being in length better adapted for the then height of its last owner than that of its present occupier.

It was upon this uncomfortable couch that Lord Castleton now fell asleep, lulled by the wind whistling through the low casement, and the rain pattering on the roof; and dreamed confusedly, that he broke to Lucy his real rank, and that she first burst into tears, and then changed suddenly to Lady Gayland and began laughing at him. When he awoke in

the morning, with a sort of indistinct doubt as to where he was, the first object which met his half-open eyes was, the initials G. and L. D., combined in a sort of cipher, and cut in the soft deal-board just by his head; no doubt by the last occupier of that bed. This he did not think a good omen, and hastily rising, he gave way to a momentary feeling of discomfort, at finding his clothes still in the confusion in which he had last night left them, and not carefully arranged for his toilet, as the habits of his life accustomed him to expect; but banishing this as unworthy consideration, he was restored, by the contemplation of the brilliant prospect which the fine morning showed him from his window, to that state of mind which made him enjoy the happiness of his first meeting with Lucy, whom he found alone in the breakfast-room.

CHAPTER X.

It were all one
That I should love a bright, particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me.

SHAKSPEARE.

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost.

BYRON.

ABOUT a week had elapsed since Churchill's arrival at Morden Bay, an interval which he had not failed to improve, by availing himself upon all occasions, whenever Mrs. Darnell permitted, of Lucy's company, as a guide to the many picturesque scenes with which she was so well acquainted; and, as the principal maternal

objection was the interference this caused with domestic avocations, the evening was generally chosen as the hour left most free for these romantic rambles.

Lucy's taste for the beauties of nature had till now lain dormant, for want of any one to sympathize in her admiration. Her aunt, to whose disposition it would have seemed congenial, never wandered far from home; and of all the various picturesque spots with which the neighbourhood abounded, those only had hitherto been interesting to Lucy which she could animate as the mental scenery of those parts of Shakspeare which, as read to her by her aunt, she most admired. But since she had attended Churchill in his sketching expeditions, she had discovered new beauties in every spot they had together visited. From admiring his power of recording effects and imitating objects, she had become anxious to emulate the

same herself, and upon the two last occasions, *she* likewise had attempted the powers of the pencil.

It was quite an afternoon for a painter, with broad effects of light and shadow. Churchill and Lucy had perched themselves on a small ledge of rock, just above the shore, commanding a well-wooded bank of the Black Glen, with some bold and jutting crags rising out of the surface of the waters beyond, when Lucy, after a time, first looking over her shoulder at her companion's work, and then comparing it with her own, said:

"Oh, Mr. Churchill! I shall never be able to do it like you. I can't make two trees, which really touch on the paper, seem so far apart, and I meant this like your's for the sea, with a ship on the horizon, but it looks much more like a wall, with a weed growing on the top; and then my paper is just as big as your's,

but I never shall be able to get half so much into it."

"Because, my pretty pupil," said Churchill, examining it, "you have made that distant cliff higher than this old boat-house."

"And so it is, a hundred times higher," said Lucy in a justificatory tone; "and if you were there, you would soon see the difference."

"But now we are not there, and we are here," answered Churchill smiling; "and in this world, objects, like events, appear to us, not according to their intrinsic importance, but in proportion to our own situation, and the manner in which they affect ourselves. For instance, dwelling in this retired spot, and in our humble rank of life, events that might convulse the country, and affright the great ones of the land, would be less observed by us, than the blight which injured your father's corn; and battles might be won and lost, which we should

feel less than the attack of a single fox upon your poultry-yard."

"It is a very stupid and confused attempt this of mine," said Lucy, tearing it in two; "and yet, separately, this is like the boat-house, and that is like the rock," holding up the divided parts of her drawing.

"Yes, and may you learn to combine the simplicity of an humble foreground with the softened outline of greatness in the distance!"

"That is a little like some of aunt Alice's speeches, which I do not always understand," said Lucy: "perhaps it is, that you have both mixed in that world of which I had only previously heard from her how anxious she had been to leave it."

"This aunt, of whom you so often speak, is it because she is unhappy that she lives so retired?"

"She never complains."

"And shall I never see her?"

"I never knew her see a stranger, but she asked me about you, when I told her that I should have come to her before, but that I had been to show you up the burn side: and she wanted to know why you were staying at our house; and when I said I could not exactly tell, she begged me to bring you to visit her some day."

"And why not now?" said Churchill, whose curiosity was roused.

"It is rather late," Lucy replied; "and mother 's particular about tea-time," looking at a little watch which her companion once well knew.

"And where did you get that little French watch?" asked he.

"And is it French? then I dare say that 's the reason George couldn't abide it, for he hates every thing French, as it is right he

should, seeing he's a sailor. It was given me by a strange gentleman who came to see the bay,—and George tiffed about it, and thought some harm would come of it. But I don't see how it's to be, for I've never seen the gentleman since, as it wasn't like I should."

"But what sort of gentleman was this?" asked Churchill.

"Why, from the little I can recollect of him, not so very unlike yourself, only that he had light curly hair, a more fresh florid cheek, and a more easy-like look, as it was natural, you know, he should; for I dare say he was a great gentleman, and had none of those cares about the coming day which mother says must always be felt by one with such an uncertain calling as yours; though, I'm sure, I think your drawings so pretty that, as long as there is money to throw away in the world, I should guess they would always be sure to fetch something."

They had, in accordance with Lucy's hint as to the time, concluded their sketching for that evening, and had begun to wind their way homewards, when Churchill, recurring to that part of their late conversation which had made the least pleasant impression on him, said,

"And this cousin George, to whose opinion, as to that watch, you seem to attach no little value, you have not seen much of him since?"

"He has not been at home again; that was the last evening he spent here, which is the reason, perhaps, that it made the more impression on me."

"But you have heard continually of him, of course?"

"Not very often; when he left us, he was no very handy penman; he used to say that it took him less time to sail round the bay than to write its name, and that there was no such difficult navigation, as tacking through all the

ins and outs of a capital B. But I hope he is improved in all that; though absent, he hasn't thought any the less about us; in that, at least, he used to be apt enough."

They had ascended the cliff by a different path from the one mentioned before, and were pursuing their way homewards through a shady lane, and had just reached as far in it as the point where, at right angles, a stile led to a footpath through a copse, known only to those acquainted with the country, as a short cut from the main road to Morden Bay. Upon coming in sight of this turn, they beheld two men in sailors' dresses, who were threading the narrow path through the wood, at a brisk pace, the foremost of whom, looking up and seeing them, made a run at the stile, bounded over it, and almost at the same moment folded Lucy in his arms in an embrace, whose ardour was mixed a

little with that alloy of roughness which is proverbially nautical.

The scream with which Lucy shrank from this unexpected salutation, though it partook more of the character of surprise than positive alarm, was sufficient to justify the ready interposition of Churchill, who, seizing the intruder by the collar of his jacket, pulled him with a sudden jerk away.

"Hands off, messmate!" said he in his turn, surprised, but good humouredly; "who the devil may you be? let 's see what colours you mean to hoist before you interpose between me and my pretty cousin here."

"And is it indeed you, dear, dear Cousin George?" said Lucy, as she rushed again of her own accord into his arms, and kissed him affectionately; then drawing back abruptly and blushing deeply, she added, "But what a beard you have got, George, and how you're grown

and altered! I declare you're quite a man now!"

"Such things will happen in four years, between sixteen and twenty, Lucy: you yourself are shot up wonderfully; why, you'd carry twice as much sail as formerly:—Lord love her sweet face!" he added, again kissing her now averted cheek: in shrinking from which second salute she met Churchill's eye, and blushing more deeply, said in a confused manner,

"We were going home, you know, Mr. Churchill: you'd better come, George, and see father and mother.—This young man," she added in a low tone, "is staying here a bit, painting the country, like those other two you remember once, George, some time before you left us."

"Oh, that's what he is, is it? To be sure, I remember the others well enough, and how you used to be sent out with one, and I with

the other, and how I frightened my man one day, by stealing his own red paint, and smearing myself with it: I made believe to fall off a rock he was drawing; he took it for blood, and thought I lay there for dead. My friend here seemed to have had a mind to shed my blood in real earnest; however, as ye took me for a rude stranger, it was all right, and respectful like, interfering to protect a woman when she cried out; so here's my hand, my man, and now just take my friend Captain Collett under your convoy, for you may guess I've many a thing to say to Lucy here, which won't concern either of you two."

Churchill, still bewildered at the unexpected turn which events seemed to have taken, looked round mechanically, to examine the stranger thus unceremoniously introduced to him. He was standing on the other side of the stile, leaning his elbows upon it. He had remained in this

attitude during the whole of the preceding scene, an amused, though uninterested spectator of its incidents. He had chuckled aloud at the momentary scuffle between George and Churchill, but had not stirred a step to take part with either; and now as his eye met Lucy's, just as she and George were about to move on, he assented to the arrangement proposed, by a familiar nod and grin, without, however, removing his elbows from the stile, or his hands from his chin. He was a short thick-set man, with that fresh, though not youthful appearance, which the eye generally registers at about five-and-forty, unless the parish annals give some more precise date as to age. The expression of his countenance was the reverse of serious; but a physiognomist would have said that the lines were rather the joint production of cunning and conviviality, than the impression of natural, quiet cheerful-

ness. His dress, like George's, consisted of a sailor's blue jacket and trowsers; but his waistcoat, which was ornamented with many little buttons and some lace, had rather a foreign appearance, and was not unlike those usually worn by couriers. He eyed Churchill curiously, as the latter looked first at him and then after Lucy, feeling not the less disgusted at the turn things had unexpectedly taken, that he did not know of what to complain, or why to resent it. Nothing could be more natural than that Lucy should be glad to welcome home her cousin, the favourite companion of her childhood; or, upon his sudden return, that she should neglect at the moment one, to whom she was bound by no ties; an itinerant painter —the acquaintance of a week.

Yet during that week, Churchill had thought he was every day making great progress in her regard; she had appeared to take a new sort

of pleasure in his society,—had been delighted either to hear him talk, or see him draw; and even now, he thought, when her cousin had attempted a second time to kiss her, her eye had sought his, and upon meeting it she had blushed, and avoided the kindred embrace. Yet now, as they walked away, George's arm was round her waist, and his profile looked offensively happy. "Come, Sir, if you please," said Churchill, rather hastily to his new companion, thinking that the others had already got sufficiently far in advance.

"No hurry," said Captain Collett, as George called him, getting even more deliberately over the stile than the square cut of his figure required; "we are only to keep within hail, you know. I 'm sorry for you; it is but a poor exchange to have only Kit Collett for your consort, instead of yon gay pinnace. But it can't be helped; you 're clean cut out, that

I can see. A nice tight little prize too. Is it that you've been over slow in making her your own, or have you stayed long enough for her to get tired of you?"

"Come, Sir," repeated Churchill again, loud and angrily, his attention having been a little taken off from the last speech by watching George and Lucy, who had now disappeared round a corner in the lane: "I desire you won't talk to me in that manner. As that young lady seemed to wish me to show you the way to her father's, I am ready to do it, provided you don't take advantage of that circumstance to speak impertinently of her; if you do, I shall consider that you would be an improper guest, and take the liberty of leaving you behind."

"Well, no offence, man; I meant none. Young lady! Lord, how grand all that is!" still speaking with a half suppressed chuckle;

"however, move on, my friend; it's all one to Kit Collett what he talks about, or indeed whether he talks at all, as long as he has one of these to stop his mouth," taking a cigar out of a case and deliberately lighting it.

This being satisfactorily deposited in his mouth, and his two hands in the side pockets of his jacket, he, without attempting any farther conversation, rolled on, following Churchill as fast as he could, whose impatient strides soon brought them inconveniently near to the couple in advance. However much Churchill might have wished to join company with them, he did not feel authorized to do so, unless he had been more sure that such an intrusion would be welcome; and of this he could see no symptoms; for though once Lucy looked round, and, upon seeing him, appeared to wish to stop, and to require urging on by her companion, yet, except at that one

moment, she seemed completely and satisfactorily occupied with her newly restored cousin, and Churchill felt therefore unwillingly obliged to slacken his pace, much to the relief of Kit Collett ; and it was in two separate detachments that they arrived at home.

CHAPTER XI.

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
  Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tanyard,
  He was a person both of sense and vigour—
A better seaman never yet did man yard.

BYRON.

GEORGE's unexpected arrival that night, produced in all the family that sort of intoxicating exhilaration of spirits, which, whenever the natural feelings are allowed to show themselves, is the effect of the restored presence of a long-lost inmate.

Even Mrs. Darnell suppressed, for the moment, her desire to complain of his protracted

silence, and of the ignorance in which he had left them as to how he had spent his time since his engagement in his uncle's ship had been out—which was now twelve months since.

As for the farmer, he was so delighted to see his favourite, that he hardly knew what he did, and went about shaking hands with everybody, and even asked the painter, with a cordial gripe, whether he wasn't d——d happy: a question, the repetition of which Churchill contrived to evade, as it would have puzzled him to answer it heartily in the affirmative. Captain Collett, the farmer pronounced, after they had had two glasses together, to be a man after his own heart, and was rather disappointed when, in answer to his enquiry whether he had been George's last Captain, George replied, "that he had sometime sailed with him, and added, that he was known to be

the best seaman between the Thames and the Tweed."

"And, as my voyages are not now very distant, George will have more opportunities of seeing his friends here, as he is about to engage with me."

"I am not quite sure about that," answered George gravely, and a cloud, for a moment, came over his brow, which was, however, as soon dispelled by the eager attentions of all around, by which he was overwhelmed. George was soon much excited by finding himself the great man of the party. Thus encouraged, he rattled away merrily, sometimes boisterously, stringing one story on another with much humour, not always confined within the narrow limits of fact, nor scrupulously restrained by the bounds of decorum; once or twice, even on this night of licence, he incurred the displeasure of his aunt, and

raised a blush on the cheek of Lucy, who was seated at the supper board between him and Churchill.

During this time it would be difficult to analyze the conflicting feelings of Lucy. Certain it is, that she did not attempt to do so herself. If she had, she would have been aware that the sensations with which she had welcomed the return of George were of a warmer nature than would have sprung from the mere renewal of childish companionship; and in the course of their walk homewards, whilst listening to his passionate expressions of delight at his return, she had admired more than it was necessary for a mere cousin to do, the improvement the interval of absence had made in his fine manly figure; and during that time, if her thoughts wandered from the happiness of the present moment, it was to distant days, and not to recent scenes. But now, when an inad-

vertent coarseness in one of George's expressions made her avert, a moment, her head, and she beheld the displeased but enduring character of Churchill's countenance, and then, as her eye met his, she read in it, more plainly expressed than it had yet been, that feeling towards herself which woman cannot long mistake; and as she combined with that her recollections of his many gentle and delicate attentions to her in the course of their recent rambles, her wishes became rather confused and bewildered; but perhaps the predominant one was, that George should be rather different from what he was. She could not, at the same time, but be aware that Churchill had been much neglected during the evening; and it was as much regret at this, springing from that considerate good-nature which in her rank of life supplies with the interest of sincerity the place of good breeding, which made her say to him

in a tone and with an expression which amply compensated for the previous neglect which it acknowledged:

"I am afraid all this must have been very tiresome to you."

As the breaking up of the supper-party at that moment prevented other answer, he took advantage of that circumstance to reply to her by a gentle squeeze of the hand.

Immediately after supper was finished, Captain Collett signified his intention to depart, resisting the entreaties with which he was pressed to share with his friend George the best spare room, from which, for their reception, the hams, &c. had just been unceremoniously rejected, as it was not thought hospitable to disturb the stranger, and his drawings and portfolios, from the room formerly George's, which he at present occupied.

"But, Captain," said the farmer, "it 's a double-bedded room, and you'd better bide to-

night with your friend George, for the night 's dark and murky, and if it had been as light as day, one's way is never somehow so canny to find after supper as afore."

" Thank'ee the same, but I can't stay," replied the Captain. " As for the night, I 'm rather partial to dark nights ; a'n't I, George ?" chuckling : " and as for supper, if it's along of the grog you mean, Kit Collett would drink as much again, and walk as steady as on the quarter-deck in a calm."

" But it 's rather an awkwardish road to the Lobster near Placeden Point, for a stranger, if that's where you're going."

" Stranger ! why nothing comes strange to me, that 's within three miles of the coast from Beechy Head to Berwick Ness."

" But," said Mrs. Darnell, " you know it must depend on the time of the tide whether you can cross Newland Creek."

" It 's just now half-ebb, and by the time I'm

down there, there won't be half-fathom water within a quarter of a league of the shore of Newland Creek, and be hang'd to it."

"That friend of your's is a man that knows his business well, I should say, George," said Farmer Darnell, as he bolted the door after him.

"Good reason he should," answered George rather gravely.

CHAPTER XII.

Oh, Childhood—blessed time of hope and love,
When all we knew was Nature's simple law,—
How may we yearn again that time to prove
When we looked round, and loved whate'er we saw

WHEN Churchill retired to bed, he in vain attempted to think of the events of the day as of no importance to him,—merely the return of a relation of the family, whom it was natural that warm-hearted amiable people should be very glad to see again, and who would soon again depart to follow his precarious profession, perhaps only to return after another such long interval, to be once more received in the same

manner. But still, whenever he thought he had succeeded in closing his eyes upon this idea, the image of George walking away with his arm round Lucy's waist would disagreeably intrude itself: true, she considered him as a near relation,—had been educated as a sister; but was that the way he considered the matter, and was it likely that this innocent illusion would long continue if he chose to enlighten her? He could not at the same time help flattering himself that he had made a favourable impression on her; and, confirmed as this hope was by her deportment towards him, at the conclusion of the supper, he believed that if he made up his mind then to press his suit he might bear off the prize. Yet there was something in this manner of effecting that object which did not altogether satisfy him. In his project of being loved for himself alone, he had always anticipated that, whilst abandoning the

outward advantages of rank and fortune, he presented himself as an equal to a person like Lucy; still he would retain the power of inspiring her with a decided passion, and he had never looked forward to any thing like competition with such a rival as George Darnell.

I am afraid it must also be allowed that there were some things in Lucy's deportment that evening which, desperately in love as he found himself, charmed as he was with her beauty, fascinated with her simplicity, had not quite pleased him. In their *tête-à-tête* rambles, there had never any thing occurred to weaken the illusion of her perfections; on the contrary her soft and gentle manners, animated only by an attractive freshness of character, which was brought into play by the workings of natural good sense, were constantly strengthening his attachment. But the unrestrained ebullition

of high spirits is a terrible touchstone by which to try the want of conventional refinement, either of mind or manners; and there were many moments in the course of the evening, whilst she was enjoying to the utmost some of her "cousin George's" nautical jokes, when her lover could not help thinking "Is that exactly the way in which I should like Lady Castleton to behave?"

Churchill rose the next morning with one conviction impressed strongly on his mind, as the result of the contradictory reflections with which he had been perplexed during the night, and this was that at any rate he had no longer any time to lose in inaction; that either his visit to Bankside Farm must now draw to a conclusion, or it must assume the more decided and permanent character with which he had meant before long to invest it.

As a mere itinerant artist, his stay had now

been prolonged enough for any assumed object which in that character he could put forward. And if as such only, he meant to be recollected by the inmates of farmer Darnell's, it was now high time that he should pack up his portfolios, already superabundantly stored with sketches, in every variety of light, close studies, and distant effects, of every object worth commemorating, within the reach of a walk with Lucy.

He had his misgivings too, that even if this did not occur to himself as a reason for shortening his stay, it would, ere long, be hinted to him in no very indirect terms by Mrs. Darnell, with whom he had never been a great favourite, as being, as she said, "at best, but a bit of a vagabond, only better than a stroller or a mountebank, inasmuch as he daubed his nasty paint on paper, instead of on his own person." His taking Lucy gadding about with

him, was also a great waste of time: but his worst offence in the eyes of this orderly housewife was, that by occupying George's room, he had caused the ejection of the hams from the spare bed-room. All these reasons made it evident that it would not be entirely optional to himself to prolong his stay indefinitely. On the other hand, he could not but be aware that if he had, as he flattered himself, already made a favourable impression on Lucy, it was very desirable now, that he should confirm and strengthen that, without allowing time for any *retour* of her earlier partiality for her cousin and playmate to arise and occupy even a corner of that heart which was to love him exclusively and for himself alone. Still that it should be necessary, in regulating his future conduct, to guard against such a possibility, grated unpleasantly against his feelings, and gave a dissatisfied and undecided turn to his thoughts,

and when he had slowly descended the stairs to breakfast, even whilst he had the latch of the parlour-door in his hand, the question rose unbidden in his mind, "Am I really in love?"

The next moment, however, the effect of the first sight of Lucy answered that question beyond a shadow of doubt, as he thought, in the affirmative. It was Sunday morning, and Lucy was dressed for church. There is, perhaps, no costume, however studied, so attractive as the unaffected assumption, in simplicity and good taste, of their best attire on this day of rest, by persons in that rank of life to whom Sunday really makes a distinction of dress; utterly perverted and lost as that effect is, when it causes an awkward and exaggerated imitation of the already *outré* fashions of their betters. But Lucy was simplicity itself, and fresh and radiant and lovely as she looked in the

maiden purity of her snowy robe, so did she always present herself on this day of thanksgiving, coming out with as little alloy of coquetry as the flowers of nature, which greet in their gayest and most brilliant colouring the spring which gives them birth.

So dilatory had Churchill's complicated reflections made his toilet, that the breakfast was far advanced when he entered, and the conversation, which he only for a moment interrupted, was one not calculated to please him; for he found George arranging, apparently very much to his satisfaction, a *tête-à-tête* walk with Lucy to church; whilst it was suggested that Churchill should go bodkin between Mr. and Mrs. Darnell in the taxed-cart.

From this uninviting mode of conveyance he was, however, opportunely relieved by a declaration on the part of Farmer Darnell, that he was unfitted for service by a touch of lum-

bago, which he had caught riding home that stormy evening from Mayton, instead of staying there quietly till morning. The excuse having been admitted by Mrs. Darnell, with the qualification, that this was the first she had heard of it, and the prospective consolation that he certainly ought not to go to Mayton at all next week, it became necessary to arrange some other division of march, as, luckily for Churchill, Mrs. Darnell decidedly objected to trusting her precious person to his charioteering powers. "How should he know how to drive? he was never like to have had a chay, a poor *predistinarian* painter!" as she called him: "No; her dear George must come with her in the cart." George, however little he liked the change, did not make any decided objection, probably recollecting enough of earlier days to know that, if his aunt chose it, objection would be of no use; and also a little

tickled by the decided superiority over Churchill, which this preference marked, as he already began to entertain an indefinite feeling of jealousy of the other's position in the family.

He therefore undertook with confidence to "pilot" his aunt to church, though he professed that of late his hands had been more used to manage the "rudder" than the "ribbons." It was impossible for the most practised woman of the world to have shown less by her manner than Lucy did whether this ultimate arrangement was or was not agreeable to her. "After all," thought Churchill, as they started together from the front door, "her natural manner is easy and unembarrassed, and it is only while in actual collision with what is coarse and uncongenial around her, that a momentary taint is breathed upon its purity; when I shall have removed her from the reach of contagion, that innocent sim-

plicity will alone remain, upon which I may engraft what impression I like, and I shall learn to think of her only as a being whose whole existence is comprised in my happiness."

"Lucy," screamed Mrs. Darnell at the extent of her voice, just as they had cleared the garden-gate, and Churchill had closed the foregoing reflections, "Lucy, have you minded that the crust to George's pie is made of short paste, as he used to like it?"

"Oh yes, mother, I wasn't like to forget that," answered Lucy, with an eagerness which Lord Castleton thought was not very appropriately applied to another's pie-crust, by a being whose whole existence he had just settled was to be devoted to his happiness.

CHAPTER XIII.

If ever been where bells have knolled to church.

SHAKSPEARE.

All things are well digested for the purpose;
Then, throwing off the title of a duke, I will
Appear to her a low-born peasant.

TOBIN.

THIS unfortunate episode rather deranged the train of ideas by which Churchill had determined to probe the real state of Lucy's feelings. Instead of availing himself, as he had intended, of the whole of this two-mile walk artfully to ascertain her real sentiments, and attempt to regulate his own accordingly, he

spoke not at all at first, then asked her three times abstractedly the different lengths of the footpath by which they were going, and the carriage-road, to church; and at last blurted out the question point-blank, "Whether she thought her cousin George improved?"

"Oh, so much! that is, in some respects," she answered, the first words eagerly, then checking herself, added, "I am sorry to see you didn't like him, Mr. Churchill; I think I should have liked him much better if you had."

"Why, my dear Miss Darnell, should you fancy I do not like him? It is true, that our different modes of life may prevent my perfectly understanding all his stories. The poor painter, who has nothing but daubing colours on canvass to show as the labour of a lifetime, can never compete in interest with him who has soul-stirring adventures by sea and land to boast."

"And fearful dangers he has had, poor dear George! has he not? The embarking the troops there—at what 's the name of the place, among the Yankees—Old Orleans? New Orleans was it? and that frightful hurricane in latitude —; he told us what latitude it was in. But it wasn't that I was going to say. Do you know, Mr. Churchill, you sometimes made me ashamed of cousin George?"

"How? Explain yourself, I pray you, Lucy," said Churchill eagerly.

"Why, for all what you say about a poor painter, and having nothing to tell of, I like so much to hear you talk, whatever it is about, and you speak to one so soft and kind, just like one of the gentlefolk; and I have been always trying to answer you the same, and somehow, I 've got used to your ways lately; but last night, when cousin George talked

rather rude like, I looked at you, and I saw by your face that you were fashed, and then I felt so uncomfortable — and, don't be angry!"

"Angry! no—why?" asked Churchill.

"And then I wished you away with all my heart."

This was not exactly the conclusion to which Churchill had hoped to hurry Lucy; but still there were many circumstances in the foregoing conversation favourable to him. In the first place, it was evident that she cared for his opinion, and also that he had awakened in her mind a sense of what was, or was not offensive in manner. Yet, from the tone in which she had spoken the last sentence, he could not but draw the conclusion, that situated as she was last night, it was his presence that she had felt as a restraint—it was to his absence she would

have looked as a relief. He would have liked to ascertain whether this merely arose from considering George's return—a return as of right to the home of his childhood, which would have prevented her imagining it possible that he could be removed from thence, though he might be superseded in her affections. But just as, intending to pursue this inquiry, he approached his companion with a tender earnestness in his manner, which was certainly not intended to meet the comments of a third person; he was interrupted by the unwelcome apparition of Captain Collett, who meeting them at the narrowest part of the path, Churchill was obliged to draw back in order to let him pass by Lucy, which as he did, he said with a leer, meant to be full of meaning, "Sorry to separate you!" and as he brushed by Churchill, he hummed the burthen of a nautical ballad then in vogue.

"From our night-caps so clean,
Our fresh laurel was torn,
And the prize of the e'en
Was recaptur'd at morn."

Ere they could recover the thread of their discourse, thus disagreeably broken in upon, they had come within sight of the parish church, and as the last loitering groups gradually disappeared within the porch, whilst the lingering tones of the slowly-stopping bell died away upon the ear, they felt that they were late, and Lucy quickened her steps, and led the way to their family seats.

The sacred building was one of the humblest of its kind; for centuries (necessary repairs excepted) it had remained much in its present state, the weekly resort of the simple and secluded neighbourhood: there never had been any opulent landed proprietors within the parish; no *squirearchial* elevation broke the regular equality of the divided aisle, or claimed

distinction or superiority from the height of its railing or the colour of its lining.

There was here no appearances at variance with those professions of equality in the sight of Him they came to address, which the service they came jointly to engage in, alike places in the mouths of the rich and of the poor, of the high-born noble and the humble peasant, sentiments which the unadorned simplicity of the sacred edifice was so well calculated to awaken in every mind. Hence, as Lord Castleton cast a look around upon the simple single-hearted groups who came there, without disguise or reservation, to confess their errors, the falsity of his own position struck him more forcibly than it had ever done before; accompanied with a sense of shame at the deception he had been practising. True, there was no unworthy motive at the bottom of that deception; those upon whose credulity he was imposing, it

could not be denied, would in every worldly consideration gain immensely by his being other than he seemed. But still no candid mind, and such was Lord Castleton's naturally, can satisfy itself with the practice of deceit or artifice in any serious affair. Was it so certain, after all, that the splendid elevation he designed for Lucy must necessarily insure her happiness? He had found her satisfied with herself, contented with all around her—the centre of a little world, which knew no other. What had been the effect which his society had already produced upon this tranquil state of mind? It was evident that it had lowered cousin George in her estimation; this was an effect, which, if it had stood alone, perhaps he might not so much have regretted; but was it not accompanied by a feeling of dissatisfaction at herself, at her involuntary participation in many former sources of pleasure? and if this

was produced merely as the consequence of adopting his views when listening to him only as the poor painter Churchill, how much would such a painful sense of unfitness be aggravated, when bewildered with the strangeness of that world to which he meant to transplant her; and what could he offer in compensation, for inflicting that constantly-corroding sense of self-inferiority, where all had previously been peace and content? Not only her gentleness would prevent her braving the difficulties of such a situation, but her very sensibility, which she possessed in a degree unusual in her rank of life, would make her more alive to painful sensations.

All these reflections, vague and half-formed, but generally unsatisfactory, floated through Castleton's mind in the intervals of the service, and gave to his deportment a restless air, as if he feared impending discovery. This vague consciousness of insecurity arose principally from

the disorder of his own mind, but was not a little increased by the anxiously inquiring expression on the face of the person immediately opposite to him, whose penetrating eyes he found at intervals fixed intently upon him with a searching, though not an unkind gaze: this he rightly imagined to be Alice Darnell. It was a countenance which, though it had already lost the freshness of youth, none could have beheld without interest, even if she had not appeared in some degree to reciprocate that interest, as was the case in the present instance. He could not conceal from himself, that though this must have been the first time she had seen her nephew George since his long absence, most of her attention was bestowed upon himself, the stranger. Yet, though her expression was rather that of melancholy interest than of reproof, the feeling it excited in his mind was principally dread of her penetration,

which caused him instinctively to drop his eyes beneath her gaze.

When the service was concluded, and the family party left the church together, Alice Darnell addressed a few words to him, in which he could not help fancying that some feeling of interest lurked beneath a form of studied coldness, and through the guise of common-place inquiry; and when the tones of his voice in reply first struck her ear, the arm which held Lucy trembled violently; and, turning away, she addressed him no more, but drawing Lucy closely towards her, after some lengthened whispering between the two, the niece begged that he would announce to her family, that in consequence of her aunt not feeling well, she had returned home with her, and they were not to expect her back to dinner; and turning together down one path, they left him to pursue his solitary way by that which he had come.

CHAPTER XIV.

The crows and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles.

SHAKSPEARE.

For many fathoms doth the beetling rock
Rise o'er the breaker's surge.

MATURIN.

CHURCHILL found that George and his aunt had already returned some time, as the young sailor's anxiety to rejoin his fair cousin had induced him to apply repeated hints, as to the rate of progress, upon the fat quarters of the cumbrous quadruped before him, which were the more readily attended to, as that experi-

enced beast knew that his head was now turned homewards.

The announcement with which Churchill was charged of Lucy's absence, made him very ill received by all the party. Farmer Darnell always missed his daughter's affectionate attentions most when labouring under a fit of lumbago; Mrs. Darnell liked particularly to be assisted in the arrangement of the Sunday's repast by some one more handy than big Betsey, as George always called the Patagonian maid-of-all-work. And as for George himself, he had been thinking all the way home how very agreeable he was going to make himself, and how he meant to show off and amuse his cousin after her dull walk with that prig of a painter. He therefore looked upon this interloper, when he appeared alone, as a bird of ill omen to him, and he began to owe him a grudge for this second separation, though it

was not like the first one, by which the object of his increasing antipathy had himself profited.

With such a state of feeling shared amongst the party assembled, the substantial meal of which they were about to partake was not likely to be a very lively one, and contrasted singularly with the heartfelt merriment of the supper of the night before. Indeed, as the majority of those assembled were not of a rank in life who make conversation for civility sake, but who, strange as it may appear, literally say nothing when they have nothing to say, not a word would have been spoken, had not habit rendered this inveterate silence so irksome to Lord Castleton, that he could not help hazarding a trite observation or two on the weather, which, if dropped elsewhere, would have been taken up, and handed back, and led to reply and rejoinder, but which were here considered such undeniable truisms, that they

were only received with an unencouraging "humph," and all again relapsed into silence, broken only by the clattering of the knives on the plates; and even this was muffled, when, instead of tearing asunder slices of beef, they dived in smoother intersections through thick portions of plum-pudding.

After dinner the society, if such it could be called, seemed mutually anxious to separate,—Farmer Darnell to his easy-chair and pipe, Mrs. Darnell to her household avocations; and as to George and Churchill, though they probably had the same object and destination in view, one went out at the back-door merely because the other went out at the front.

Churchill bent his way towards the part of the cliff by which he knew Lucy must return, with no other pretence for lingering there till her appearance, than that furnished by his small pocket sketch-book; having got into a great scrape with

Mrs.Darnell, on that day week, by sallying forth, portfolio in hand, as he was considered so completely as a professional person, that it was reckoned a profanation of the Lord's day for him thus to labour in his vocation on it. The ledge upon the side of the cliff, from which he could best command the prospect of Lucy's return, was, however, too much of a bird's-eye point of view to be advantageous to a draftsman: this circumstance, joined to the imperfect implements with which he was upon this occasion provided, induced him soon to relinquish even the attempt to exercise his assumed "metier," and abandon himself to those reflections which the singularity of the situation in which he had placed himself, and the events of the last four-and-twenty hours, had rendered more than ever striking.

Though sitting with his book open before him, and his pencil in his hand, so completely

had the inward bent of his thoughts shut out the consciousness of any external objects, that he felt startled when he heard a voice some paces above him, exclaim, " There she is at last." Instinctively, his eyes followed the path by which Lucy must return; the more natural was this direction, as he recognised the voice above to be George's. But he could discern no moving object in the whole length of the track. Another voice from above, which reminded him of the harsh tones of Captain Collett, now rejoined,

" Yes; there, that 'll do; I see you, that 's near enough to show her to us; now, about with her, you lubbers, there she goes, that 's right."

Churchill's eye dropping from the path on which it had been fixed, to find out what else these remarks could apply to, he now observed, for the first time, what under other circum-

stances would have struck him merely from its picturesque appearance. Unnoticed by him, a lugger had neared the point of the cliff, the sun shining gaily on its light sails, and sparkling in the foam which was dashed back from its side as it was pressed close up against the wind. Now, however, even whilst these words were spoken from above, confirming him in the idea that it was to this vessel the allusion was made, she was on the sudden put about, more sails were set, and with a fresh breeze from the land, she dashed rapidly out into the open sea.

The projecting ledge of rock, which formed rather an awful sort of canopy to the niche within which Churchill was sitting, effectually prevented his being seen by those who might be leaning against the stone-wall at the top of the cliff; as he rightly conjectured the two persons whose observations he had just heard now were. Provided with so unsuspicious an

excuse as his sketch-book for continuing where he was, he determined to take his chance for overhearing some more communications which (he hardly knew why) powerfully excited his curiosity.

But though only separated by a few paces from those who spoke, in spite of straining his attention, which the more he listened the more he felt inclined to do, he could but very imperfectly catch the purport of what was said; sometimes, in the middle of a sentence, a louder and a longer wave would break, roaring on the shingle beneath; sometimes a screaming sea-bird would hover round his head, as if on purpose to baulk him.

"Well, Darnell, my lad," said Captain Collett, "so all's right. Jack Dawkins has not mistaken the land-marks. And you were not more glad to see again your friends of last night, not even the tight little Lucy, than I

am to see heave in sight my first of favourites, '*La Pie voleuse.*'"

"And I should see her with much more pleasure if she were not so near my friends of last night. She's not the right sort of company for them; and between ourselves, Captain, now it's come to the point, I dread their becoming better acquainted with each other."

"And since when has the wind set in that quarter, lad? Didn't you, yourself, remind me, who know the whole line of coast, what a snug place to land——"

Here the screaming of the sea-gulls above Churchill's head, and the roar of the breakers beneath his feet, combined to prevent his catching the remainder of Collett's answer; and when these noises were again comparatively calmed, he heard George protesting—"Nay, never say I'm ungrateful, or that I can forget the ugly scrape you helped me out of this time

three years; or that I repent the merry period of adventure we passed together the last months of the war in our privateering cruises; but that was other-guess work, when, if one did chance to get knocked of the head, no one knew or cared whether the venture we were engaged in chimed in with the exact letter of the law. Who thought of George Darnell then? and whether he was washed overboard with a bullet in his body or without, no one would grieve about his death more or less for the manner of it. But somehow, coming back here amongst kith and kin, and finding them all the same, I can't help wishing I was so myself."

"Oh, certainly!" rejoined Captain Collett with a sneer, "they must seem all the same to you: above all, Lucy; she has thought of no one else since you first left home, and she's only had that painter chap here on purpose to meet you, that he may paint her your picture

against your next cruise. He was a studying her face pretty closely, you'll be glad to hear, when I met them going to church this morning."

Churchill could only hear, in reply to this, the immortal part of himself condemned to everlasting perdition in the emphatic monosyllable usually applied to such a purpose. Whether the very vehemence with which this was uttered warned the speaker himself afterwards to drop his voice, or the surrounding noises again conspired to drown it, but it was some time before the listener could again make out what was said; when he did, George was saying, apparently in answer to some remonstrance of the other, "Never fear, you have my word, and you shall find me as faithful here as if I was still on the smooth white sands of Cherbourg or the shingles of Sussex; all I meant was, that when this morning I paced

along the churchyard amongst the tombstones, that told of those who had borne the name of Darnell in peace and good-will to all around them, and now seemed to meet my eye on all sides as if to remind me of that with honest pride, I felt——But what signifies explaining to you feelings which are not at all in your line; they may be between me and my rest, but they shall not come between my word and you."

The conference seemed here to be interrupted, for George halloed out suddenly in a louder voice, "Avast, Mary! whither away so fast?"

"To Bankside, to say that mistress is but poorly, and Miss Lucy will stay with her aunt to-night."

"All goes contrary," muttered George in reply.

"Well, Mary, say you spoke me by the way, and I bore the message for you;" and

George and his companion upon this prepared to return homewards.

Churchill remained a few minutes behind, absorbed in reflections upon what he had so imperfectly collected. It appeared, though he could not exactly make out in what enterprise they were at present engaged, that Captain Collett was a very dangerous companion for his young friend, and that he had, perhaps, already involved him in some scrape which would effect his future respectability in life. There was nothing which he could distinctly gather in the shape of an accusation from the conversation he had just heard; but he determined to be upon the watch, and, should any thing further happen to confirm his suspicions, to communicate them to Farmer Darnell, and in the mean time to watch the next apparition on the coast of the "Pie Voleuse," which he now saw, after having run about a mile before

the wind straight out from the land, was standing to the southward: he felt, at the same time, much disappointed at the protracted absence of Lucy; and, anticipating nothing but discomfort in the present state of the Darnell family, returned to Bankside Farm.

CHAPTER XV.

Out of thy long experienced time
Give me some counsel. SHAKSPEARE.

A faint, but faithful, portraiture of one
Most dearly loved, and now for ever lost.

THE agitation of Alice Darnell, which had struck Churchill as remarkable, was not seen without surprise by her niece, who had never previously, in all their intercourse, observed any break in her usually composed demeanour, or a ruffle in her equable manners. She said no more in the course of their hurried return to her cottage, but occasionally pressed affectionately Lucy's arm, on which she leaned, and

gazed earnestly in her face with an expression of anxious tenderness.

Upon reaching home, she drew her niece into her snug little neatly-furnished parlour, and throwing herself upon the sofa, covered her face for some minutes with her hands, seeming not to hear Lucy's repeated requests to know what she could do to comfort her. At last, raising herself, as if with an effort, and looking up in Lucy's face with a countenance strongly marked with the expression of inward suffering, she asked abruptly—"And you say his name is Churchill?" Her niece answering in the affirmative, she continued—"But what can the name tell, which may easily be an assumed one? It is not that the features, or even the countenance, are the same; but there is something in the air and manner which too strongly recall—— And oh, above every thing, the expression of those eyes, when he looked tenderly on her—

I had hoped that I had forgotten that of which they renew the recollection with the freshness of yesterday. In the last few minutes I have lived over again months of suffering, which I had hoped, in vain, subsequent years of repose and resignation had almost effaced from my too vivid recollection. It is but one effort more, and for your sake I will make the attempt. Those events, which, by constantly refusing to dwell upon, I had hoped the obliterating hand of time was gradually glossing over, I now find as distinctly scarred as ever in the deeply-cut tablets of my memory. It will but cost me one more pang, that they should assume the tangible shape of words, and operate as a warning to my beloved niece, in the danger which I think at present threatens her. Lucy, Churchill loves you, and you must cease to love him."

The poor girl, whose youth, innocence, and

ignorance of the world would have prevented her being able to define the nature of her own feelings towards Churchill, had that habitual deference for her aunt's judgment, that she would never have supposed that she could be mistaken in any opinion so oracularly delivered, and, therefore, never thought of disputing what she seemed to take for granted, that she had already begun to love Churchill; though she could not account why, if this was the case, the idea of George should rise at the same moment in her mind. She made no reply, but seating herself at her aunt's feet, and hiding her face on her knees, waited some explanation of the last sentence.

"I feel assured," continued Alice Darnell, "as of my own existence, that he is elevated far above your rank in life; and trust me, I speak from my own experience, when I say there are no sufferings at all to compare with

those which arise from unequal attachments. Whether the resemblance which so strongly struck my imagination is other than a strange coincidence, I have no means of judging; but that Churchill is other than that which he here passes himself to be, I feel I cannot be mistaken.—Lucy, it is necessary that, in what I am about to say, I should speak to you much of myself; that I should disclose many parts of my early life, which have been hitherto concealed, not only from you, but from those of your relations nearer my own age, with whom you have been living. My brother is only partially informed of much of what I am going, without reserve, to lay before you. Much I shall have to speak of feelings which neither his habits nor his disposition would have enabled him to understand. The principal facts I felt it my duty to confide to him, and it was at his desire that no mention whatever was

made of them to your mother; for though blame might not be attachable to me, there were circumstances which, he said, her peculiar mode of thinking might make subject of reproach. If now I speak more openly to you than I have ever done to any one, it is because, in spite of that complete ignorance of the world, which your position has implanted, I have always observed in you a fund of natural good sense, which will induce you to make the right use of that practical warning which I am urged to try as an experiment, from the similarity, in many respects, of the position in which you at present are, to that whence I derived every misery except disgrace.

"Your father and I were early left orphans. George's father had already been some time at sea when our parents died, therefore the loss to him was not so great as to myself and my elder brother. An old bachelor, relative of ours,

undertook the management of the farm, and the instruction of your father in the art by which he was to live. It was more difficult to decide what was to become of me. But it was at length determined nominally, upon the authority of our guardian, but in reality by the advice of the gossips in the neighbourhood, and my own wish, that I should be placed at what was called a finishing-establishment for young ladies, at a small sea-bathing place thirty miles from hence. I had not, however, long been there, before, at one of the exhibitions for which this school was celebrated, I attracted the attention of an excellent and talented, but eccentric elderly lady of the name of Nesbit, who happened to be staying at ——— for the season. Mrs. Nesbit had long been left a widow with a large fortune, the greater part of which she spent in the encouragement of the fine arts. In most of these, in her younger

days, she had herself been no indifferent proficient; but latterly, her increasing infirmities had confined the exercise of her taste to admiration of the skill of others. Frequent attacks of gout in the hand had prevented her continuing her pencil, of the previous success of which her boudoir still showed some favourable specimens; and the same cause deprived the world of many records of her playful imagination, in which she had formerly indulged, when still able to write as quickly as she could think. Perhaps, of all the trials to which the progress of physical infirmities subject us, there is none so melancholy as when they produce the forced inaction of previously well exercised faculties.

"Yet, though my acquaintance with Mrs. Nesbit only commenced after she was already suffering in a cruel degree from manifold privations of this nature, I never saw her temper

the least ruffled by any feeling of envy at the happier state of others; her kind disposition, and her still fresh feelings, enabled her to derive unalloyed pleasure from the success of others. When* in London, her house was always full of those who had most recently exerted themselves in any line with distinction; and even when I have known her to have been suffering acute bodily pain, I have seen her benevolent countenance light up, as if the triumph was her own, when any new aspirant for fame has been brought to one of her choice little evening reunions, to hear from her own lips the acknowledgment of the pleasure she had derived from his successful efforts. At the period when I first became an inmate in her house, she had just acquired the afflicting consciousness that she could not, without risking the total loss of eyesight, indulge as formerly in reading for any time together to herself.

This was, to a person of her tastes, the most cruel privation with which she had as yet been threatened, and one which it required all her resignation to bear with equanimity.

"It was to alleviate her loss in this respect, that having been pleased with something she observed in my voice and elocution at one of our school exhibitions, she easily persuaded me to accompany her to London as a companion, whose principal duty was to be reading aloud to my benefactress,—most sincerely may I so style her. For though I know that generally there is no fate more deplored than that of a dependant companion, yet, whilst I was in that much stigmatized situation, I experienced nothing but kindness, and I derived nothing but pleasure from the occupation which it entailed on me.

"Our readings generally consisted of the best works of the day, and when not satisfactorily

supplied with those, selections from the first poets and dramatists. Mrs. Nesbit was an enthusiast about many of these, but Shakspeare was her idol; and it was in my endeavours to please her, by showing that I really felt the beauties which I was the medium of conveying, that I first cultivated that taste for elocution, which, as you will see, I afterwards exercised in a wider field. The first feelings of gratified vanity I had upon the subject, was when Mrs. Nesbit would half raise herself upon her sofa, and after gazing at me intently for some time, interrupt me with,

"'My dear Alice, what an actress you would make!'

"Amongst the many distinguished persons of every profession who used then to frequent my friend's select circle, was often to be found that great actor, whose name you have often heard me mention with enthusiasm, when we

have been reading together either Hamlet or Macbeth ;—I mean the head of that family who have for nearly half a century upheld the character of the stage, as much by their virtues, as they have supported its attraction by their talents. He was, indeed, a noble creature ; perhaps only too exalted and abstracted in his view of human nature for the matter-of-fact age in which he finished his career. But the revival of recollections of that time is leading me from the point on which I wish to speak, even had I no other and graver object in what I am saying. It is not with you, who never beheld him, that I should vindicate my opinion of the professional pre-eminence of the person in question. I only alluded to him, because my partial benefactress often led this great artist to participate, apparently with warmth and sincerity, in her favourable opinion of my uninstructed attempts at recitation; and as

enthusiasm, real or assumed, was not his characteristic, this testimony gave us both the greater pleasure.

"In the midst of all this, and whilst my friend was getting every day more attached to me, I was unexpectedly deprived of her invaluable protection, by a sudden attack of gout in the stomach, which proved fatal to her in the night-time, and before assistance could be procured.

"One moment I must pause upon the awakened recollections of my earliest friend and benefactress, whose awfully sudden end exercised so great an influence on my future fate, and I will then proceed."

CHAPTER XVI.

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit?

SHAKSPEARE.

When and where and how we met, we wooed
And made exchange of vows, I 'll tell thee.

IBID.

" IT had not been in Mrs. Nesbit's power to provide adequately for me; the whole of her income having been derived from a handsome jointure, which, at her death, reverted to her husband's heir-at-law. A codicil to her will conferred on me, as a legacy, the small sum in ready money which her liberal, though not ex-

travagant style of living, had left at her banker's; it also conveyed to me all her library of books, most of which you now see round you. Utterly unprotected as I was, thus once again left, and still only eighteen, it was necessary that I should determine without delay upon the course which, under these circumstances, I wished to pursue.

"Perhaps it was a natural defect in my character, only elicited by the situation in which I had been lately placed, that made me shrink instinctively from returning once more amongst the kind, but rude and uncivilized companions of my earlier days. Combined with this dislike to that which was the obvious course for a young girl like me to pursue, recollections arose continually of Mrs. Nesbit's evidently sincere opinion—'My dear Alice, what an actress you would make!' which gradually produced an uncontrollable longing to embark in that precarious profession: the exercise of which,

in my unpractised mind, as yet only associated with the idea of such partial encomiums and kind criticisms as had hitherto met my ear from the friendly circle in Mrs. Nesbit's drawing-room.

"Once having made up my mind, I determined to consult the great actor, whom I have before mentioned, upon the best manner of putting my project into execution. He seemed much embarrassed at the nature of my appeal. It appeared as if it never had occurred to him, from the sort of society in which he had heard me give specimens of my abilities, that it was likely I should ever be called upon thus to exert them professionally.

"He told me, that he should be deficient in candour, if he did not repeat what he had formerly said, 'that he thought me eminently qualified to succeed should I really be determined to try the stage; but,' he added, 'in spite of those brilliant prospects, he could

never dispassionately advise any one so young and unprotected to take such a step; and if the advice which I sought from him was not as to the best means of doing that upon which I had already decided, but that I would consult him as to the expediency of doing so at all, he would do all in his power to dissuade me, at least at present, from thinking of such a thing.' I thanked him sincerely for his kindness, and expressed no more gratitude than I felt towards him, but still adhered to my determination, representing to him how little I knew what else to do with myself, and how sanguine I felt at being able and willing to surmount all the difficulties and inconveniences of the first steps of the profession. Seeing me determined, he gave me letters of introduction and recommendation to some connexions of his, then in the management of one of the first provincial circuits.

"By them I was, in consequence, most cordi-

ally received, and offered a choice of any character I chose for my *debut.* Long before that night arrived, I found out how differently my exertions were likely to be estimated here, and at Mrs. Nesbit's. There, in the absence of all competition, praise excited no envy, and captious criticism would have been avoided as ill-breeding. Here my arrival had disturbed long-established claims to admiration, and had excited, first dismay, and then dislike. I had chosen Juliet for my first appearance, a choice most young ladies have made before me, and probably will do as long as 'debutantes' of eighteen each season succeed one another. I was not aware of the offence this was likely to give till after it was all settled; when I found I had displaced a majestic-looking widow lady, whose name appeared upon the prompter's books as having been in undisputed possession of the part for nearly twenty years; a pre-

scriptive right upon which she rested her claims, perhaps rather technically than judiciously. Had it been a young girl, like myself, with whom I interfered, she might have relied upon the anticipation of my failure, and upon the part then reverting to her; but this lady felt that her hitherto uninterrupted tenure once broken in upon, it was not likely it would ever be revived.

"Under her auspices, therefore, was organized a party to cry down my inexperienced attempts, and, with my eyes thus officiously opened to my own defects, I felt, as much as they could impress upon me, how very far from perfect I then was.

"It was all so different to me from the dining-room of Mrs. Nesbit—the mere walking the stage was a difficulty which I thought I should never get over, particularly when, at each of the wings, I always found during my rehearsals,

some of my new friends to explain to me, solely for my good, how ridiculous something which I had done had been. The contrast between my present mortified feelings and my previously over-sanguine expectations was so great, that I should have been completely disheartened, and, perhaps, abandoned the stage in despair, but for the good-natured encouragement of many others of the company. All the effect, therefore, which this attempt had upon me, was to determine me to defer, till we removed to the next town in the circuit, my first appearance; and in the mean time, to study hard to acquire technical facilities, and to conquer those defects, of which I ought to thank my rival for having taken such pains to make me aware. The play had been announced, and therefore was not withdrawn, but an apology was made for the non-appearance of the *debutante*, and my matronly substitute once more "strut-

ted and fretted" with ill-concealed triumph through the childish sorrows of Juliet. This exhibition was also a useful preparation for me, as it taught me many practical tricks to avoid.

"The company removed to a fashionable watering-place, then in full season, and at length my first appearance was positively fixed. And here let me do justice to the general kindly feelings of fellowship which I found to exist amongst the members of a profession, which by no means creates evil passions, though it may occasionally concentrate into a strong focus the causes which usually excite their display. That constant and close collision of pretensions, in which self-love must receive daily wounds, may naturally have a tendency to produce that envy and spirit of detraction, from which no society is free, not even that, where the contests of vanity are for the most unimportant objects, and between the

most independent persons. But amongst my brethren of the stage, I generally found these feelings as fleeting as the passing pageant which had excited them; and in all essentials they might challenge a comparison with any of those whose own means were most assured, in their eagerness to extend from their own precarious provision, encouraging sympathy to the efforts of the inexperienced, and substantial support to the decay of the aged.

"In my own case, the interested attempt to crush a young beginner, excited in many of the company a strong feeling in my favour; and the interval which had elapsed had certainly been of considerable service to me, perhaps not a little in destroying that ill-grounded feeling of self-confidence, in which the partial panegyrics of friends had previously nursed me. But the want of this very much increased the terrors of the awful approaching trial.

"Perhaps the time I had now unassumingly passed amongst them had predisposed the company in my favour; but during the last day or two before my attempt, it is impossible to do justice to the almost paternal interest shown for me by nearly every member, from the amiable manager himself, down to the apothecary of the night. Still, nothing could alleviate the overpowering sensation which I experienced when the anxious moment I so long anticipated actually arrived. The house was crowded in every part. The cheering welcome with which I was received upon my first entrance did not dispel my fears, as I felt that it was only so much advanced in trust that, by my exertions, I would afterwards repay it. But as the play proceeded, and I recovered my confidence, the first spontaneous burst of applause which rang from every part of the house caused a consciousness of triumph, quite unlike any thing

I had ever before experienced. It proclaimed a mysterious command over the unsuspecting sympathies of a mixed multitude, which was immeasurably superior to the finest compliment that had ever gratified my ear in Mrs. Nesbit's drawing-room. My success was complete; I may now, without vanity, refer to it as unparalleled.

"Amongst the most enthusiastic of my supporters was a party of officers in the stage-box. The period to which I refer was that during the late war, when the militia was quartered about the country, the officers of which often contained in their number many men of rank and fortune; of this party the greater number were uniform in their acclamations. But even on that night of agitating triumph I could not help remarking the evident admiration of one officer, who did not join in the vehement demonstrations of his companions, but sat in the

corner nearest the stage, with his speaking eyes fixed upon me with an expression which, perhaps, derived some of its intensity from the strong glare of the foot lights, which cast a pale hue over the rest of his features. Overpowered with congratulations on all sides, I retired to rest after my triumph, and slept soundly, only that in a confused dream of happiness the one distinct object that presented itself was the expressive countenance in the stage-box.

"My *debut* had been so beyond expectation successful, and the crowded houses every night I played was such an unquestionable proof of increasing attraction, that the very excess of my triumph destroyed at once every spirit of rivalry, as it became obvious that my stay there could not extend beyond the little probationary practice, and that before many months elapsed I should be on the metropolitan boards. Even my *ci-devant* rival, whose term was just up,

accepted a re-engagement, subject to the condition of her exchanging for the present the girlish white satin of Juliet for the motherly black velvet of Lady Capulet.

"Still, upon every succeeding night of my appearance, the same young officer, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied, was always in the same corner of the stage-box.

"This had continued for some weeks without our ever becoming acquainted, and thus his admiration appeared purely professional. The fame I had acquired, and whatever personal attractions I then at eighteen could boast, caused me, whenever I stirred out, to be much followed by many of the idlers of the public walks, but never by him; and the wise regulations of the manager, considering the mixed nature of the company at a watering-place, put many difficulties in the way of the intrusion of strangers into the green-room.

"One evening, however, under some pretence or other, two of the brother officers of my unknown admirer had contrived to introduce themselves there in a state that evidently showed they had rendered themselves unfit for any society. But, at the period to which I refer, it was not so well established, as now I hear it is, that, to appear drunk, was 'unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman." The most noisy of these made me the object of his loathsome addresses; the disturbance he created had reached the front of the house, and my brother actors were endeavouring, by quiet remonstrances, to induce him to withdraw, when my unknown friend entered the room, and seizing him by the arm, with an authoritative movement of the head, motioned him to retire with him.

"The offender seemed awed for the moment,

and did as he was desired. Being called at that moment to the wing, I overheard, at the distance of a few paces from me, the continuance of their conference.

"'What d——d nonsense,' said the offender, 'why, she's only an actress.'

"'If you had any of your senses left,' retorted the other, in an impassioned tone which went to my heart, 'you would see that there could be no reason that a person who, by the display of every grace, and the exercise of consummate talent, commands the sympathies of the most refined, should, on that very account, tolerate the disgusting approaches of such a beast as you have made of yourself."

"'A very fine sermon for a soldier; so, amen! and I shall go back to my beauty."

"'Hold!' said my defender, stopping him, 'I am most serious—if you will listen to my advice, so much the better; but I am deter-

mined by foul means, if I cannot by fair, to prevent your returning.'

"A short scuffle, and but a short one, ensued; for my defender, though much the slighter of the two, was perfectly steady, an advantage of which the other had deprived himself, and, seizing his athletic antagonist by the nape of the neck, with one push he sent him from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

"Persons, in the state in which he then was, are said not to be easily hurt, or else I should have thought he must have been killed; however, he rose without injury, and departed, very angry, and determined to take ulterior measures.

"Just at the moment this occurred, I was obliged to appear upon the stage, which I did in a state of agitation that was afterwards remarked upon. The consequence of this altercation was a meeting between the two officers; my champion received a ball through

his right arm; but his antagonist, from his conduct in the whole brawl, suffered, like Cassio, such a wound in his reputation, that his brother officers visited his fault with the same punishment as Othello did that of his lieutenant, and compelled him to quit the regiment.

"That all this could not occur in a small gossiping watering-place, without being recounted in a thousand different ways, and not all to my advantage, you may well imagine;—though when I say *you* may well imagine, I forget my poor dear child, that, up to this moment, you are happily ignorant how peculiarly prone that ever-changing compound, called the world, is to decry any one who has previously excited its admiration. Many stories that were then circulated never wounded my ears; but they had been widely diffused: for one morning, some days after this had happened, I was

sitting in my room with my fellow-lodger, an excellent elderly lady, the DUENNA on the stage, but off it the Lady Bountiful of our company, with whom I had arranged to keep house, as a sort of protectress to my youth, when the maid brought in a card with the name of Captain Somers, who begged to be admitted. The publicity which had been given to the late affair, had, of course, made me acquainted with the name of my declared defender and previously unknown admirer. Gratitude, of course, required that I should admit him. He looked dangerously interesting, with the arm which had been wounded in a black sling over his uniform, and his countenance still showing traces of his late confinement. He appeared embarrassed at first, as he apologized for his intrusion, which he said was to hope I would excuse any unpleasant construction which might be put upon

his unauthorised interference in my behalf, which, he said, had arisen unintentionally out of the circumstances of the case: that he felt at the time he could not do otherwise; but that he much regretted the publicity of the whole affair. I could not do less than thank him most warmly for his generous interposition to save me from insult; and I, in my turn, felt embarrassed in doing so: an awkwardness which was not diminished by my fellow lodger taking advantage of that opportunity to rise and leave the room.

" If Captain Somers and I then were lovers, we were not perfect in our parts, for the conversation was by no means easy or animated, now we were left alone; indeed it was many weeks before he spoke of love, and so imperceptibly did we arrive at that point, that when he first pleaded his passion, so far from falling strangely on my ears, it seemed to me as if he

had never previously spoken on any other subject. But where is the woman who requires to be told she is beloved? and how much more precious are the moments, when that consciousness is derived from any other source than that of the tongue?

"The innocent intercourse which from this time subsisted between us, so far from detracting from my profession, gave me an additional stimulus to exertion. Somers was an accomplished critic; and no indifferent praise, however unqualified, is half so sweet as little improving suggestions softly hinted by an admiring lover. Yet ignorant as I then was of the world, and wrapped up in my own day-dreams of love and fame, I had my misgivings that Somers's was not an unmingled happiness; indeed, sometimes it was with pain I beheld the occasional fits of despondency to which he seemed subject, without my being able to divine the cause. During

all this time he never mentioned his family, and I knew nothing of it beyond the reports amongst the company, to which I listened little, and did not attach much credit. Months passed over, and the time arrived when we were to remove to our next quarters, a large seaport town in the south, whilst the ****shire militia were to continue in their present station."

CHAPTER XVII.

A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away;
Thy husband in thy bosom lieth dead.

SHAKSPEARE.

"THE prospect of this separation appeared to be anticipated with much dread by Somers, and he sighed over each succeeding day that diminished the interval that remained to us. Having always beheld in him this desire to linger over each departing moment, I was much surprised, two days before the time that I was to have left, to receive a note from him, announcing his own departure. It was short,

and only, 'I dare not say more, till farther assured of the truth of what I have heard, than that I trust this temporary absence will, in the end, lead to the reverse of separation.' I endeavoured to rest satisfied with this mysterious consolation, and contrive to keep up my spirits during our own removal; but when week after week passed over at our new quarters, without my hearing farther from Somers, the secret anxiety which preyed upon me began to affect my professional exertions, and diminish my popularity. At length Somers returned: he was in deep mourning, and from his manner had evidently something to communicate, whilst the warmth of his affection for me seemed to have gained strength from absence.

"The whole mystery of his conduct was now unravelled. It appeared that he was the

only son of Lord Castleton; that whilst yet scarcely of age, he had been induced by his father, whose estates were much embarrassed, to marry a rich heiress; that she, well knowing for what he had married her, never thought it necessary to give him that affection which he did not seem to require; that after the birth of one son, they lived little together. The peace of Amiens happening about that time, she had, under the pretence of ill health, obtained his ready permission to go with some of her own family to the Continent, whilst his parliamentary duties, which were then new to him, gave him, on his side, as ready an excuse for remaining in England.

"At the sudden breaking out of the war, Mrs. Somers, with many others of her countrymen and women, became a *detenue en France*. As long as she had been allowed to remain at

Paris, this forced detention had not appeared to be unpleasant to her, but when, for some reason not explained, she had forfeited the favour which had procured her that indulgence, and had been exiled to a small provincial town in France, she had become very anxious to return to her own country. But reports which had reached Somers of her levity, had not caused him to regret more than he would have done at the period of their former separation, that it was utterly out of his power to facilitate such an event. He owned that upon first becoming acquainted with me, he had looked forward to that sort of temporary connexion, which would have thrown a gleam of happiness over his at present solitary home; but that as a more intimate knowledge of my character showed him the purity of my unsuspecting innocence, he at the same time began to entertain doubts both as to the pro-

priety of acting upon such an intention, and the probability of succeeding in it. Hence all his inward struggles and ill-concealed fits of despondency. Just as he had almost brought himself to determine that the period of my removing from * * * * * should terminate our connexion, he received a report of the death of Mrs. Somers in France. His first impression was merely the shock of the sudden removal of one so young from the world, with whom he had been so closely connected: and though he had never loved her, all his own faults towards her now crowded upon his recollection. Oppressed with these feelings, though he already began to cherish half-formed hopes for the future, he would not see me before leaving * * * * *; especially as he wished first that the intelligence which he had heard should receive farther confirmation. This had been obtained in London to the full

extent that could be expected, from the imperfect communication between two countries in a state of war.

"He now pressed for an immediate and private marriage. That it should be immediate, he pleaded only too strongly the excess of his passion: that it must be private, he at the same time owned, to allow him to remove the opposition of an aged parent, and from a feeling of delicacy on account of the deep mourning he still wore for Mrs. Somers. Almost wild as I was with the prospects of happiness which were thus opening to me, I still felt shocked at the suddenness of the proposal; but so unlimited had become his influence over me, that he could have proposed nothing, consistent with honour, to which I would not have readily acceded. I pleaded for delay, I fear feebly—I know ineffectually. Somers had brought with him an old college friend, to perform the ceremony,

upon whose secrecy he could rely, and who was to leave the town immediately after. Fatal precipitancy! We were married the next morning. So anxious was Somers that nothing should occur on which to hang a suspicion of the event which had taken place, that he even recommended my performing as usual that night at the theatre. His will was law to me, and I made no objection, though I own, a presentiment of evil oppressed my spirits, when the prompter gave out 'Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage,' as the performance of that evening.

"My husband, with what pride I then thought of him as such, occupied his usual place in the stage-box. In the first act, whilst kneeling before Count Baldwin, I could not help fancying that the words were addressed to that obdurate father-in-law, whose forgiveness was necessary to the acknowledgment of our marriage; this gave a peculiar energy to my

appeal, which added much to the effect of the scene, and crowned my exertions with a success, much beyond that which had latterly attended my more languid efforts.

"In the midst of the thunder of applause which followed, a party of naval officers entered the box where Somers sat, accompanied by a lady, dressed in the height of the French fashion, which, as there was then little communication between the countries, was never worn without exciting much attention. The eyes of the whole house were in consequence turned on the lady. Somers rose upon their entrance; but upon turning round to observe them, it appeared to me as if he staggered, and leant for support against the side of the box; in this position, the light of the stage-lamps fell strongly upon his features, and showed to me his whole face, even his very lips, of a deadly paleness. Before rushing out of the box he cast one long

look of utter despair on me. I could not then comprehend its meaning, but it was the last I ever received from my husband. *My* husband did I say? He was HER'S. It was Mrs. Somers who had entered the box!

"Yet even in the dreadful suspense in which I was left, my surmises never reached the horrible truth. What agony it was to go on acting—acting through five long acts; yet I forced myself to proceed, with the recollection that Somers had wished me to avoid anything that might lead to the premature discovery of our marriage. Yet, what a night was that on which to assume fictitious woe! And there she sat, and at such a moment 'twas I that was pampering her morbid sensibilities. Even then she wept in torrents at my ideal sorrows, and was carried out in convulsions, unable to bear the sight of my assumed madness and despair—she whose unlooked-for appearance in the world

was about to bereave me of every earthly hope. And even in those moments thus trifled away in such wretched mockery of grief, what fatally real horrors were preparing for me!

"Somers had rushed homewards in a state approaching to delirium; he locked himself in his dressing-room. Fatal chance! His pistol-case lay on the table beside him. He was alone. His state was desperate. The sudden revulsion from the height of expectant happiness had been too much for him. Look which way he might, he saw no opening for hope; and there was no friendly hand to stay his frantic purpose. Where was I then? Which way employed? I never can bear to think of it. Hurrying impatiently homewards the moment I was free to do so. All was then over. Amidst a crowd which was already collected, I found Mrs. Somers, who had left the theatre, overpowered by her sensibility, which my ficti-

tious sufferings had excited; now bending over the remains of what had been *her* husband, and, I still thought, *mine.* But the mouth which that morning had breathed its vows to me, was now distorted in death—shattered by the desperate aim of the pistol. Oh, Lucy, even I endeavoured in vain to recognize those loved features as I pushed aside every one,—yes, even *her*, to assume for the last time that position by him which I thought mine by right.

"Mrs. Somers rose indignantly, and the dreadful cause of this horrid scene broke fearfully upon me, through a torrent of the most vehement abuse which she launched upon my devoted head, such as an irritated woman thinks herself justified in venting upon the most degraded of her own sex. I could have submitted meekly to all she said—I hardly heeded it, till she called me her husband's murderess. Was I that?—Yes, at that moment I felt my-

self a guilty creature; for what precious moments had I not wasted in the unmeaning garb of mimic woe, whilst he was left alone in his despair to do the horrid deed! Had I but been there, I would have suffered shame, I fear even dishonour, to have saved him; nay, more, I would have renounced him for ever, I would have restored his newly-plighted faith, to have preserved his precious life, and to have been allowed to offer prayers for his happiness."

Alice Darnell forced herself to gasp forth these last words, and then sunk back senseless. When Lucy had succeeded in restoring her to herself, she said, "I thought I never could have brought myself to revive in words these harrowing recollections. You see to what a state it has reduced me, and how unfit I am now to draw from the sad tale that practical warning I had wished, as to the danger of unequal attachments,—above all, of surrendering

the affections where any mystery involves the object. One word I may as well now add, that you may understand the events which I have detailed. I said that Somers had one infant son, but it had remained with his grandfather, Lord Castleton, from the time its mother first went abroad. The rumour of Mrs. Somers' death had been purposely circulated to facilitate her attempt to escape: so anxious had she latterly been to leave that country which she had sought for pleasure, that she embarked in an open boat, and had been taken up by an English cruiser, the captain of which paid her every attention. It was accompanied by him that, upon landing, she had gone to the theatre, and within a twelvemonth from that time she became his wife. To-morrow, dearest Lucy, I shall be calm, and better able to speak farther, but you must stay here with me to-night."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Your sorrow was too sore laid on,
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,
So many summers dry. Scarce any joy
Did ever live so long; no sorrow
But killed itself much sooner.

SHAKSPEARE.

Is passion to be learned then? wouldst thou make
A science of affection? guide the heart,
And lead it where to fix?

SUCH was the sad tale of her own blighted hopes which Alice Darnell forced herself to reveal to her beloved niece, with the fond hope that so striking a proof of the danger of unguardedly pledging the affections, where evident incongruity of station was combined with mystery and apparent concealment, might operate

as a check upon that growing partiality for Churchill, which she dreaded had already taken root in Lucy's heart. With this view, when the next morning she had in a great degree recovered her usual composure, she dwelt more on how much she had herself suffered from her imprudence, in having admitted a stranger, and one obviously her superior, into an intimacy, without due caution in previously ascertaining what his actual situation was. Had she but been timely informed of Colonel Somers' marriage, how much would have been spared them both, and how dearly had he paid for his tacit deceit on this subject.

She farther proceeded to affirm her own conviction that Churchill was not exactly what he pretended to be: in this opinion she owned that she might be rather biassed by the extraordinary resemblance, though more in air and expression than in form and features, which he

bore to one, the recollection of whom she had never ceased to cherish since his untimely loss. But though this coincidence might rather influence her judgment, yet, independent of this, she had had opportunities, in the best society at Mrs. Nesbit's, just at that age when outward impressions are more strongly distinguished, of exercising her talents as a close observer of manners; and the peculiar tact which she had on this subject, had very much contributed to make her efforts in comedy rival her success in tragedy, during her short theatrical career. It has, too, been remarked throughout, that Castleton was by no means a skilful actor of the part he had assumed; and to a person of Alice Darnell's discrimination, the evident constraint with which one of his rank in life assumed the manners of an inferior station, though distinct in its nature, was not less remarkable, than the awkward assumption of re-

finement by a vulgar person. The obvious embarrassment, too, with which he avoided her searching observation, could only be explained by there existing some reason for concealment.

But the penetration with which Alice Darnell had discovered her niece's danger, was more conspicuous than the judgment of the course which she took to avoid it. For though Alice Darnell had been a faithful and interesting representative of the outward aspect of human passion, as described by others; though in her own person she had internally felt as strongly as any one its devastating power; she had, perhaps, for that very reason, never examined closely or coolly the various causes to which it sometimes owes its origin, or traced to their sources the crooked channels through which, in its earlier stages, flow some of those springs which all combine in the end to give irresistible power to its headlong course.

True, even in this age of mixed and mitigated feelings, there does sometimes rise, pure and powerful at its fountain-head, the sympathetic impulse of "love at first sight;" but for one instance of this kind, how many may be found where that passion, instead of ripening regularly from original sympathy, has been unaccountably grafted on habitual indifference; and of this might be cited instances, even amongst those who, once under its influence, have given most decided proofs of its power, in braving disgrace and ruin. It seems sometimes as if the heart only then acquired a predisposition to infection, when every human motive of action, prudent as well as virtuous, had combined against it. Lovely girls have been known to bloom unnoticed in the same society with him who, when they have become the wife of another, has urged elopement with all the energy of passion; this, be

it observed, not from any selfish distinction of the different requisites of a wife and a mistress,—for grant he succeeds in his suit, and, by every tie of honour, his wife she must become, not as she might formerly have assumed that character, richly endowed in good name and wealth,—the ornament of society,—but dragging him forth an outcast, impoverished by the very price at which he is forced to purchase her blighted fame. How, then, shall we account for such early misplaced indifference, and subsequent ill-timed susceptibility, but upon the endless and unaccountable perversity of the human passions?

But though Alice Darnell need not have been expected to enter into these abstract reflections, yet she made two mistakes, which might have been obvious even to her, in the influence she expected to produce upon her niece.

In the first place, no one in love is ever diverted from their course by the recital of the sufferings of others, under similar circumstances, if these sufferings, however great, are invested with interest. She had also, by what she had said, inadvertently disposed her niece's feelings much more favourably towards Churchill, for she had flattered her vanity; and the breast which beats under the modest tucker of the country maiden, is not less accessible to the influence of vanity, than is that which openly swells with the pride of conquest in sight of the crowded ball-room.

In all her intercourse with Churchill, there had been something which she could not understand; she was never quite at her ease, and this had produced a consciousness of constraint, which had left a feeling of humiliating inferiority, not improving her favourable opinion of her companion. But now she had been

given some intelligible ground on which to place that superiority on his part, which she had felt without acknowledging, and, at the same time, she was taught to suppose that he was willing to forego all that very superiority for her sake. This placed him in a light much more dangerous to her peace of mind, than that in which she had been accustomed to consider him. If, therefore, his influence over her was still far from being certain or confirmed, her defence rested on quite different grounds from those on which her aunt had been inclined to place reliance; and her best protection arose from the nature of her early attachment to her cousin George.

Many circumstances had combined to keep her inexperienced mind in doubt as to her feelings towards him during all their early intercourse, the constant intimacy of childhood had swallowed up the first symptoms of court-

ship; to this had succeeded protracted absence, and apparent neglect on his part. He had at length returned, as we have seen, with undiminished affection; but many things had conspired to prevent its appearing in his manner to her, not the least of which was the evidence of those assiduous attentions in another, which, whenever preference is sought in the "checkered shade," or in the "gala glare," never fail in producing some effect, and mostly succeed in attaining their object.

The fact was, therefore, that at this moment Lucy was herself, if not in a delusion, at least, in doubt, as to how much she cared about her "cousin George."

She, however, listened most attentively to all her aunt's cautions as to the danger of encouraging her other admirer, and bowed assent to her parting advice.

"I do not wish you abruptly to show dis-

trust; but above all, avoid as much as possible being alone with him."

To this tacit promise Lucy meant to adhere, but the state of things she that day found upon her return home did not favour her immediately acting up to her intention. George had left home early in the morning, as he said, upon business, professing an intention not to return in the course of the day—perhaps not even at night. Her father and mother had just revived some well-contested point in dispute, which, from long experience, she knew would, like some of the fights of the middle ages, be conducted without loss of blood, and only end in a drawn battle at close of day. This did not render the prospect of remaining at home during the afternoon very inviting, and therefore she could not resist Churchill's gentle suggestion, that she should accompany him to the cliff, on a sketching expedition. She again put

on her bonnet, announcing to the parental combatants, during one of those pauses in the fight which Mrs. Darnell never allowed to be of long continuance, "That her object was to see whether her aunt, whose illness had been the cause of her absence the night before, was better that evening."

CHAPTER XIX.

My Anah! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not: 'tis a word I cannot
Part with; although I must from thee.

BYRON.

We'll so bestow ourselves, that near, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge.

SHAKSPEARE.

'Tis true they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
And every creed, and every race,
With them hath found—may find a place.

BYRON.

CHURCHILL and Lucy sat side by side on a projecting ledge which she pointed out to him on the face of the precipitous cliff; this position, for an admirer of the picturesque, was much better chosen than that which he had

himself accidentally selected the night before, and of which, as a painter, he had so little availed himself. The intersections of the craggy cliffs, which rose one behind another, as they looked along the line of coast, were here bolder and more broken and varied. From the height of the point whereon they sat, all below was blended in that deep, purplish, hazy hue, which, in a painter's eye, gave to indistinctness a charm. The sea-birds, Churchill's unwelcome intruders of the evening before, now skimmed in silence the mid air far beneath them, the undulating motion of their white wings being the only sign of animation around. Not a sail was seen in the wide surface of the distant expanse: and along the deeply sheltered sides of the little bay beneath, the waters lay dead, and dark, and still. The next promontory of the succession of crags before them, less precipitous and lofty than that on which they were placed, had scattered over its face

huge clumps of thriving brushwood, just then touched with the first mellow tint of autumn; whilst the heather, which grew in patches wherever the light soil clung to the interstices of the cliffs, contrasting its rich dark blue colour with the lighter grey of the broken rocks, gave sharpness to the fantastic shapes in which these were dispersed about. In the middle distance, looking rather inland, could be traced the valley down which ran the course of the little mountain stream, by whose side Castleton had first wound his way to Morden Bay. And this path he followed once again in his mind's eye, and he recollected his then follies, and he thought of all his checkered life, his successive feelings—of his hopes—of his frivolous pursuits—which had all produced heart-burnings and disappointments since that evening when he had first beheld the lovely being who now sat beside him in matured beauty and still unsullied purity and innocence;

and as he again looked on her with a long impassioned gaze, their eyes met, and she thought that it must have been thus Somers looked on Alice Darnell. More fondly she felt he could not look, and this feeling gave a sensibility to her own expression, which her lover had hitherto sought in vain; and they sat long while they fancied they were drawing. Though they did little the while, and said less, it seemed, for the first time, as if they understood each other, and all Churchill's gestures were those of impassioned tenderness, and it was so that Lucy felt them; and it is certain, that at that moment she thought of no one else; and her glances, though timid and stolen at intervals, vied with his in tenderness, and had he then pleaded, a negative could hardly have found its way to her lips through the inward agitation of her frame.

But there had been throughout his whole

scheme too much plan and method in Churchill's romance, and now the moment had come which might fix his fate, and make her his wife—for it was with such an intention that he wooed her—incongruous doubts rose in his mind,—he hesitated,—he would not for the world have abandoned his object, yet he almost wished to delay the irrevocable step; but it was not without an effort that he could force himself to do so, for his feelings were much excited, and more than once the conclusive words trembled on his tongue, but he checked himself, and blurted forth an indifferent observation in an altered tone.

The effect of this was instantaneous: there is no female breast, however untutored and inexperienced, which does not feel, in its inmost recesses, the reaction caused by an opportunity slighted of profiting by its tenderness. In a moment, Lucy became aware that the evening

shadows had redoubled their length; that the sun was on the point of setting; that it was already late for her to proceed to her aunt's: rising for this purpose, Churchill eagerly offered to accompany her, but this she firmly opposed, naturally from not wishing to show that she had braved her aunt's caution, the prudence of which the experience of her late sensations had confirmed.

She declined, therefore, his offer of help, even down the first winding track, where, indeed, from its narrowness, assistance would have been impracticable. This track led from the spot where they now were into the broader path, which conducted along a lower ledge round the point towards her aunt's; and she proceeded to descend it with the secure and elastic step which is the combined result of habit and natural activity. Churchill watched her with an anxious eye through the first part

of her progress, and afterwards with an admiring one, as her fine form gradually receded, whilst she pursued her way with an unconscious grace in every motion, which would have done honour to many in a more elevated rank in society. But the fact is, the drawing-room school, though it may improve, no more creates grace, than the *manège* does the most admired paces of the horse.

Churchill watched her round the point, and knowing that she would again become visible in passing the next, which jutted farther into the sea, he stood there awaiting the moment in a state of mind in which were blended dissatisfaction with himself, with increased admiration of her. Whilst absorbed in these mingled reflections, he was startled by a large stone, which, detached from the cliff above, rolled close beside him, and striking the portfolio, in which he had been just loosely depo-

siting the different half-finished productions of Lucy and himself, scattered them about; and the evening breeze, just then risen, catching them up as it swept by, they "soared, ducked, and dived in air," and were soon carried far out of reach of recovery. Churchill, looking up to see what accident had caused this, beheld George at the distance of a few yards, standing between the edge of the cliff and the wall at its summit, against which he leaned, whilst one foot, which without doubt had been the means of propelling the stone, was still thrust forward. He had a broad grin on his face, and was evidently enjoying the mischief he had caused.

There was nobody in the world from whom Churchill could at that moment so ill have borne a joke, if indeed it really was a joke. Without a moment's reflection he sprang upwards, and finding himself beside his unpro-

voked aggressor, whom he still found forcing a laugh, though evidently only to suppress some less pleasant feeling to himself which lurked beneath, said,—

"I don't ask you whether you did that, but why?"

"I wanted to put up that brood of cormorants that roost below yonder, and cared not what other birds of ill omen I frightened by the way. As for your trash, I'll buy you better, printed and painted too, at any pedlar's stall for a penny apiece."

"You mischievous imp of a cabin boy," retorted Churchill enraged, and lifting at the same time a small slight cane which, from habit, he always carried, even on these inappropriate excursions, "you ought to be turned over to your own boatswain for chastisement; it would be too much honour to touch you with this."

It is probable that Churchill did not intend really to assault his antagonist, but as he had raised his cane as if with that view, George, whose passions were just as much raised, and whose experience had not taught him to consider such threats as figurative, grasped firmly the bludgeon with which he was described on the eve of his first departure from home, and which, in all his vicissitudes, had never been farther from him than where it was still within reach of his cot. He gave it one masterly flourish over his own head, and then allowed it to descend with its full swing upon that of Churchill, who fell senseless at his feet.

Lucy in the mean time had reached the farther projecting point, from which this foremost part of the cliff was again visible, just at the moment when the stone which had struck the portfolio, had scattered Churchill's drawings to the winds; and this she had

witnessed, for upon arriving at that point she had paused a moment, and cast " one lingering look behind," to the spot where she had left her late companion, scarcely conscious herself that that action was prompted by feelings for him at the time, which, could George have interpreted, would have given additional force to that jealousy, of which he had just shown such a violent symptom. She had been unable at first to account for the cause of the loss of the drawings, but though the distance was great, and the light becoming more uncertain, she too well knew the figures of both of the combatants not to see only too plainly the progress of the scuffle above; and observing the violent action of George's powerful arm followed by the dead stiff fall of him whom he struck, she was riveted to the spot with dumb horror at the idea that the tender companion whom she had but just left, who had so lately all

but spoken the assurance that he lived only for her, had been even at that moment murdered by her earliest friend ; whilst her conscience whispered that she herself had been the unhappy subject of dispute.

Whilst still deprived by the horrific sight of any power to move, she beheld three or four other men approach the scene of the late conflict, and her first impression was, that they were both ministers of the law and witnesses of the deed, and that George, arrested by their authority, and condemned upon their evidence, would pay the penalty of that act to which perhaps he had been driven by her cruel caprice; and she thought of their early inseparable years, and their former parting, and how different that was from the dreadful final one which such a state of things would too surely bring, and she pressed her hand against her eyes in mute despair;—but when again she

looked, it was obvious that the men approached George with no hostile intent, but on the contrary, that, evidently acting under his direction, they had raised the body of Churchill from the ground—and George's hand pointed downwards over the edge of the cliff, and the men bore their burthen towards the brink of the precipice, and she, shuddering, thought that in another moment she should behold the mangled limbs dashing from rock to rock, as they fell; and the dreadful idea rousing her from her previous stupor, she gave one piercing shriek, but was answered only by the startled wild fowl screaming discordantly as they whirled round her head. But in one minute more her immediate fears as to the intentions of those who bore the body, were relieved, when she saw them take a steep and winding path which descended the side of the cliff to the shore.

She then guessed that they were conveying

their burthen to a well-known cave, close to which the path conducted, and which she remembered from its having been the point of some of her early rambles with George. A moment she hesitated, from dislike to trust herself amongst such apparently lawless men; but depending upon George not being so changed but that he would be both willing and able to give her protection, she determined to try her influence over him, with a faint hope that Churchill might not actually be dead, and that she might still be the means of preventing further danger to him.

By the faint indistinct glimmering of twilight which yet remained, as she descended the cliff and approached the small bay into which the cave opened, she could perceive a large boat which had been run ashore, whilst on the shingles beside it were scattered several barrels or kegs, and a little farther out at sea, yet

sheltered by an abrupt projecting cliff from the more inhabited line of coast, a small vessel lay moored, and several figures appeared engaged in conveying the kegs from the open shore into the concealment of the cave. The wild air of these men, as far as the increasing darkness allowed her to distinguish them, and the rough blasphemous oaths of which almost their whole communication seemed to consist, as far as the suppressed tone in which they spoke allowed her to make out what they said, both conspired to make her shrink from advancing nearer, or presenting herself to their notice; but being detected even where she stood aloof and trembling, by the quick and restless eyes of one of the party, ever on the look-out against surprisal, and being rudely dragged forward, she was almost at the same time recognised and rescued by George, who, upon hearing a noise, came forward from the interior of the cave,

accompanied by Captain Collett, whose command to unhand her, backing the more manual interference of George, the men muttering oaths, and, to her, unintelligible ribaldry, returned to their labours, and she found herself at the mouth of the cave with George and his Captain.

CHAPTER XX.

But my sins
No more the pleasure from the stripling wins;
And such, if not yet hardened in their course,
Might be redeemed, nor ask a long remorse.

The hours that we have spent
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us. Oh! and is all forgot—
Our schoolday friendship—childhood innocence?

SHAKSPEARE.

Do you remember all the sunny places
Where in bright days, long past, we played together?
Do you remember all the old home faces
That gathered round the hearth in wintry weather?

THIS cave, which had two arched openings, both leading to the same interior, and supported by a colossal rocky pillar, was at low

water nearly dry, excepting near the centre, where a clear pool of brackish water was left from one spring-tide to the next, surrounded by a bed of the finest white sand. All this outer cave was entirely the work of Nature, and had probably been progressively scooped out to its present size, by the whirling eddy of water, which, during high tides and storms, rushed in through one opening, and out at the other, according as it was driven by the directing force of the wind Within this outer cave was another large recess at right angles to it, which had at some time been assisted by the hand of man. The narrow, low opening to this, was generally choked up by a bank of the white sand, which, as the waters rolled round, they dashed against it; and as the small passage behind, thus concealed, gradually rose as it opened into the inner cave, that part was itself quite dry; and the entrance to it being thus unsuspiciously closed from ob-

servation, it had been thought by George, who had accidentally dug through the bank with his fingers when a boy, that along the whole line of coast, a better spot could not be selected, in which to stow their kegs, till an opportunity occurred of by degrees disposing of them inland.

It appeared to Lucy as if her arrival had interrupted for the moment a dispute between George and his Captain; and in this she was confirmed by Collett saying, as soon as the men had returned to their work,—

"It is true, it can't be helped now; but it is a d—d foolish scrape you 've got us into: why couldn't you leave the man alone? It 's true, I begin to doubt his dying. Perhaps it would be better if he would, for we can't leave him here to blow us; and anyhow, there 'll be such a hue-and-cry raised, that, hang me! if I know when we shall be able to look after the cargo. The tide 's ebbing over-fast, or I 'd chuck 'em

in again, and take a long last leave of Morden Bay, and be d—d to it, for an unlucky hole; but there 's not time to think of that, so the kegs must even stay here, and we must stow this lumber in the hold in the place of them."

Touching Churchill's body with his foot, and finding him still insensible from loss of blood, he added,—

"But let me tell you, that to exchange all these *spirits* for one *body* is a losing trade, either for this world or the next;" and chuckling complacently at this last idea, as a man who thought that the mere scoffing at serious matters in itself constitutes a good joke, he retired towards the inner cave, calling out to George, "to take the girl in tow, and drop down out of sight of their job."

But George seemed stupified by the conflicting feelings which struggled for mastery within him, and allowed himself to be silently drawn by Lucy on to the beach, through the opposite

opening of the cave to that through which the smugglers were carrying the kegs.

"And is it come to this then, George!" she said: "these are then your companions,—that is your friend, your master! And has all sense of shame left you, that you could bring such a ruffian under my dear father's peaceful roof? And then to finish all by murdering that poor good gentleman! Heaven, in its mercy, preserve him!" added Lucy fervently, in a low tone.

"He 's not good—no more are you, and he 's no more a gentleman than I am," answered George, doggedly, his good feelings being for the moment overpowered by the evident sympathy of Lucy for his rival. "And it 's all along of you both, that I 've come to this."

"How can you say so, George? The poor man, since it offends you to call him gentleman, never saw you till two days ago; and your present courses you must have adopted,

with these associates, long since; and for me, it 's now more than four years since we have met at all. And think of this spot, George—this cave. The last time we were here together, who would have thought that it would be thus we should meet again? Do you remember the smuggler we then saw chased by the King's ship; it was the last vessel of that sort, till to-night, that had ever appeared on this coast; and the running fight, and the sound of the guns gradually dying away in the distance, and then our suspense; and we heard no more, till you brought that printed paper of the travelling pedlar, which you read to me, and which told how they were all hanged: George, dear George! why did you ever forget that paper?"

"'Tis too late to think of all that now, Lucy; though I thank you for still caring for me, if it 's ever so little. There was a time when you might have saved me, when I wrote

to you, about my first scrape, before I got from bad to worse."

"You wrote to me, George! When? Never from the day you went away have I heard once."

"Ah, there was the mischief, then. But I wrote all about it, when I'd lost all my money, like a fool as I then was, and am still; and how it was a girl like you — no, not like you— but a girl, who had taken it all; and that's what it was, and I was rather ashamed at first to own so to you. Yet I was easier, when I had done it, for I never felt so much how I loved you better than all the world. And as we were a long way off at the time, and the Atlantic rolled between us, I was rather matched how to make sure of your getting it; but though I was never much of a scholar, I took a sight of pains with the direction. And I wouldn't put Mayton on it, as they used to do on most of our letters here; for I found, when

I had got to London even, most people there had never heard of Mayton, so I argued that a-tother side of that great water they warn't like to know it: so, instead, I put 'Lucy Darnell, Bankside Farm, England,' for I made sure, at least, they must have heard of England. And long I waited there in the Indies, in hopes of an answer—and none ever came, as indeed it wasn't like, if you never received the letter. And so at last I took up with the offer of this here Messmate, though at the time I had but half a mind, for I thought you 'd never approve of the like."

"But, George, how came you in this distress? Where was the uncle with whom you sailed?"

"Oh, he and I agreed that we suited each other best at a distance, so he got me swapped to another ship, which I liked well enough, for I got double wages; but I soon found that the more money I had, the less I could keep it;

and when I landed in the Indian Islands, it went in more ways than I like to tell, or think of myself now. And then Captain Collett spoke me fair, and a merry time we had together in the privateering line, in which he then was; and when the Peace came, we had been too used to dangers and their reward, to take to carrying coals along the coast. So we 've been dodging backwards and forwards across the Channel ever since, in defiance of the revenue Sharks. But being a bit over-well known there now, we got a correspondent at Flushing, and popped over here unexpected like."

"Unexpected indeed!" said Lucy, "and that it should be most unwelcome too; for I had rather never have seen you again, though Heaven knows how I 've longed to do so! than that you should come back to bring shame on us all. And my poor father too, who was as fond of you as if you'd been his own son. He 'll feel this more than all the rest of the

world put together — except me!" she added falteringly.

"It needed not to speak so to make me feel," said George: "all along, my fear has been the loss of your good thoughts; and when I came back the other day, I had made up my mind to ask all your pardons, to give over the connexion, and stay at home; but it maddened me to see that you had clear forgotten your poor cousin George, for that plausible painting chap!"

"Shame on me!" interrupted Lucy, "that I have now so long forgotten him, whilst listening to your bad tale of yourself. That I could do so at such a moment, may prove to you what now you shall never hear from me, unless you learn to deserve it better, how long and how much I have thought of you. But if you would not have me hate you, George, instantly rescue from these ruffians, this poor

person, whom your own mad violence has placed in their power."

George, touched by her manner, and rendered docile by shame, instantly repaired to Collett, who was himself much puzzled to know what to do with their prisoner, and consented to leave him behind, provided he would bind himself solemnly not to disclose what he knew of their proceedings; to which George, for his own sake, added the condition, that he should instantly leave that part of the country, and particularly Bankside Farm.

Lucy in the mean time entered the cave, to observe in what state poor Churchill then was. She found one of the smugglers bending over him and holding a dark-lantern close to his features, which he appeared to be examining, and which were still fixed and insensible. The man had undone both waistcoat and neckcloth, and evidently was searching about his breast,

as she thought, for plunder; though, as he pretended, to find out whether he had any other wound. There was, however, an appearance of care and attention in this man's manner, which she could not reconcile with his purpose. He stated that the sufferer had shown some signs of returning animation; had called, as he fancied, on her name, but had relapsed. Now he again began to move, and with the first symptoms of consciousness, George made the offer of liberation, coupled with the conditions mentioned above.

The wounded man seemed to make an effort to give force to the articulation of his reply, as he answered,

"Never! I will make no bargain with such as you: ruffians! do your worst, and at your peril be it."

The smugglers, who had now finished their work, and were anxious to depart, enraged at

this untractable answer, became clamorous to shove off with him, and Captain Collett gave the orders to bear him to the boat; Lucy clinging wildly to George, implored him, "Oh, leave him! leave him, for my sake leave him!"

George's bad feelings were again roused by the manner of this appeal; he roughly replied, shaking her from him, "For thy sake!—never! What! that he may stay behind to hang us, and bless you!" He then jumped into the boat, already filled with his companions, one of whom, who had secretly helped himself too freely to one of the kegs which had been opened that its contents might encourage them at their work, cried out, "Oh, if the land-lubber stands in the way of our messmate George, I'll soon settle his business."

He then presented a pistol to Churchill's head. Lucy thought she saw George spring

forward and knock the pistol out of the fellow's hand, but neither that nor any thing afterwards could she recollect distinctly, such had been the agitation of this dreadful evening; and as she endeavoured to fix her eyes on the boat as it heaved unsteadily through the surf, her brain seemed to reel responsively within her. She fell powerless on the beach, and tearing up the sand convulsively with her outstretched hand, she cried wildly for help, till her senses completely abandoned her, and she lay there in unconscious exhaustion much of that awful night.

At times she partially awoke to confused visions of Churchill's mangled form, and the last moments of George's disgraceful career; and more than once she raised herself and endeavoured to strain her sight through the intense darkness, and to collect her scattered senses to decide whether it was fancy only